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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

NATIONAL NEWS
Final race for Senate decided
p5

ANIMALS
Amazing honeybee behavior
p10

HOW TO
Enjoy ice skating this winter
p24

Dec. 23, 2022 • Vol. 3, Issue 140 • $5.99

Making sense of the world

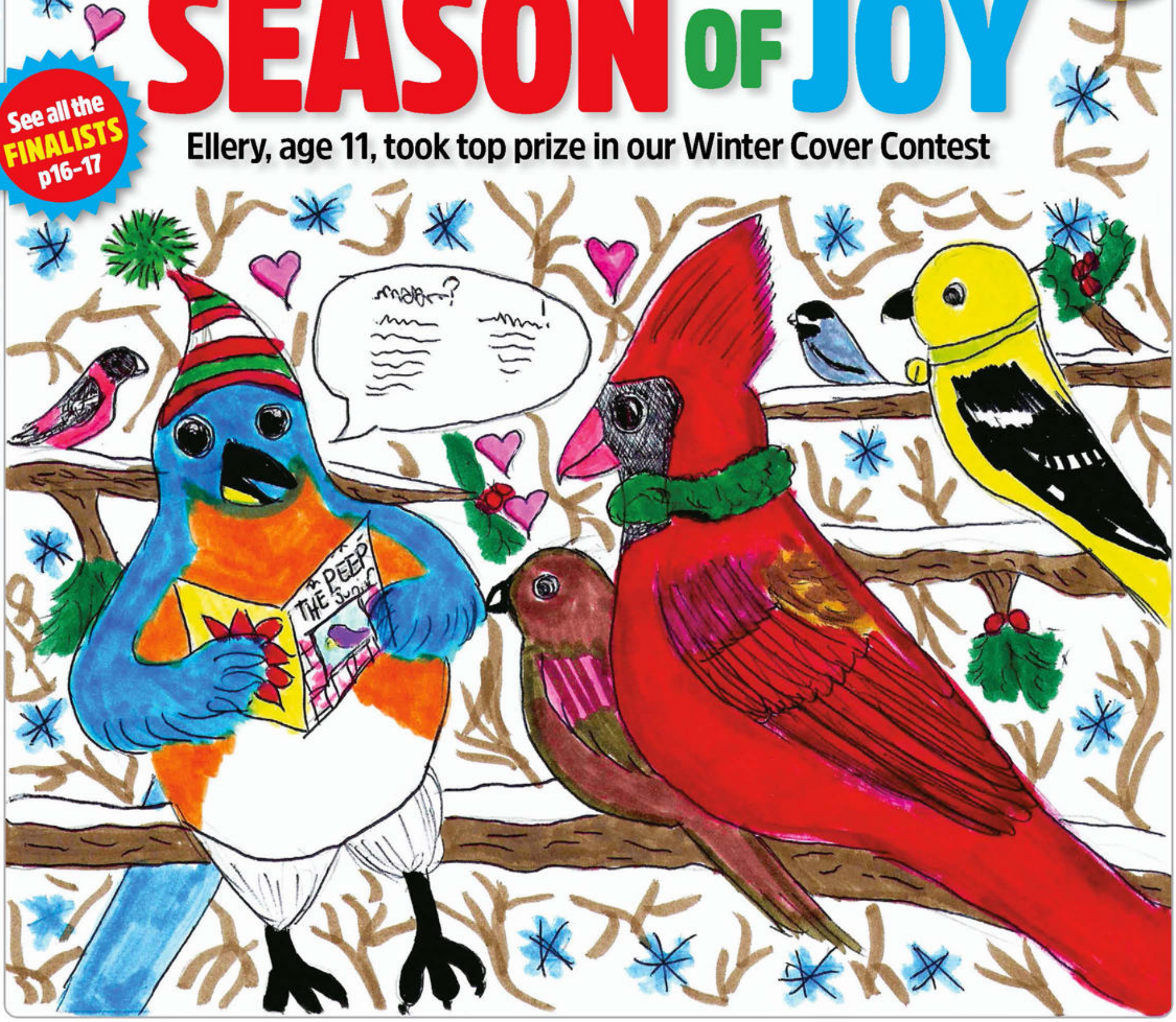
THE WEEK

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

SEASON OF JOY

Ellery, age 11, took top prize in our Winter Cover Contest

See all the FINALISTS p16-17



Animals like this frog and chameleon are at risk.

DID YOU KNOW?
About 38% of all land on Earth is used for agriculture such as planting crops and raising livestock.

Olympic decision delayed

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that it will hold off on choosing a host location for the 2030 Winter Games for at least 13 months. This is because the IOC is uncertain about whether climate change will create a shortage of snow in the potential host cities. The 2026 Games will take place in Italy.

Global effort to protect species

From December 7–19, representatives from nearly 200 nations are gathering in Montreal, Canada, for a summit called COP15. Their goal is to develop a plan to protect threatened plant and animal species. Scientists say that if countries do not take action, 25% of these species could go extinct (be eliminated) by 2100.

What is COP15?

COP stands for Conference of the Parties, and this is its 15th gathering. It is run by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which first met in 1992. The United Nations (UN) is a group of 193 countries that work together on issues such as human rights, peace, and climate change. At COP15, about 10,000 elected officials, scientists, climate experts, business executives, and policymakers are discussing ways to halt and reverse a loss of biodiversity (the variety of living things in an area). Decisions at COP15 must be agreed to by all nations involved. The US is one of a small number of countries that is not participating. The event was scheduled to take place in Kunming, China, in 2020, but it had been delayed because of the pandemic.

Huang Runqiu

What are the goals of COP15?

Scientists say biodiversity is declining at the fastest rate in human history, due to human activity including farming, use of fossil fuels to power cars and homes, industrial air pollution, and destruction of forests and other areas to enable humans to live and work there. CBD nations agreed to biodiversity goals in 2010 but have not met them. To address this, COP15 participants are establishing a new set of goals. The most well-known of these is "30 by 30," which aims to protect 30% of the world's land and water by 2030. This will require at least $200 billion per year, and there is debate over whether richer nations should invest more than poorer countries that have greater biodiversity. Other goals include reducing the spread of invasive species and making companies disclose activities that harm nature.

How are Indigenous peoples involved?

Indigenous peoples (people who were the first to inhabit a place) are vital to COP15. Although they make up about 5% of the world's population, about 80% of the world's plant and animal species are on their land. Indigenous leaders are calling for a greater role in the planning process because, historically, many Indigenous people were forcibly removed from their land by people wanting to use or conserve it. The leaders do not want this to happen again. "We are here...to send the message that we cannot achieve ambitious conservation targets without fully reflecting and respecting and protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples," said Jennifer Corpuz, who is part of the Kankana-ey Igorot people in the Philippines and represents the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity.

How are people reacting?

"People are here to really commit and discuss," said Florika Fink-Hooijer, a leader of the European Commission's environmental efforts. "This gives us hope." As the conference took place, activists gathered and marched in the streets of Montreal to demand action, many wearing costumes to look like birds or trees. "Long-term objectives are important, but they have to be followed by immediate actions," said Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois, spokesman for a Canadian political group.

What will happen next?

As *The Week Junior* went to press, Huang Runqiu, president of COP15, said the various parties involved were making progress. New goals and steps for saving biodiversity will be announced during and after the conference.

Moon mission is a major success

The Orion spacecraft splashed down in the Pacific Ocean on December 11, marking a successful end to the Artemis 1 mission for NASA, the US space agency. NASA head Bill Nelson called the splashdown a "crowning achievement."

Orion launched on NASA's powerful Space Launch System rocket on November 16. After traveling more than 1.4 million miles and flying within 80 miles of the Moon's surface, the gumdrop-shaped capsule returned through Earth's atmosphere and deployed a system of 11 parachutes before plunging into the ocean near Mexico's Baja California region. A video of the landing is at tinyurl.com/TWJUS-OrionReturns.

The splashdown occurred exactly 50 years after humans last landed on the Moon. Artemis 1 was the first step in NASA's larger Artemis program to send people—including the first woman and the first person of color—to the Moon and, eventually, Mars. Artemis 1 was uncrewed, but Artemis 2 will carry astronauts. "Our work has really just begun," said Emily Nelson, a chief flight director at NASA.

Orion after splashdown

South Koreans can have three ages.

FAST FACT
South Korea is home to nearly 52 million people, about 81% of whom live in urban areas.

Law makes Koreans younger

Everyone in South Korea is about to become at least one year younger because of a law passed by South Korea's parliament (similar to Congress, the branch of government that makes laws). Some people will even become two years younger.

In South Korea, there are three methods to determine someone's age. Under the "Korean age" system, babies are a year old when they are born and turn a year older every January 1. This means a baby born on December 31 would turn 2 the next day. Under the "calendar" system, used to calculate eligibility for such things as military service, babies turn 1 on the first January 1st after their birth, then turn a year older on that date every year.

The third method is the "international age" system, which is what most other countries, including the US, use. A baby's age is zero at birth, and they turn 1 on their birthday a year later and get a year older every birthday.

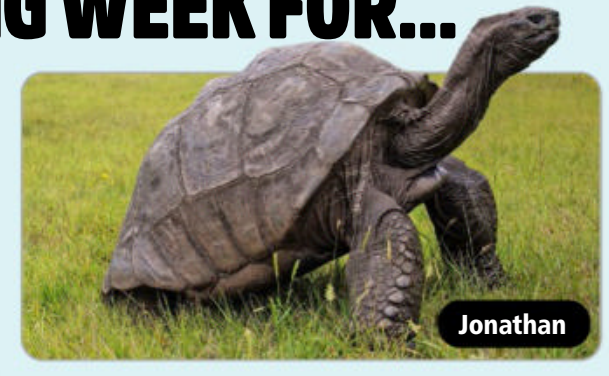
A citizen in South Korea could potentially have three different ages, which has led to confusion, as one official said. Under the new law, effective in June 2023, all official documents will use a person's international age.

While most South Koreans go by their Korean age, a recent survey found that a large majority of them supported simplifying the age system. "I remember foreigners looking at me with puzzlement because it took me so long to come back with an answer on how old I was," one person told Reuters news service. "Finally, I'm about to get my real age back!" said another on social media.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A ROYAL HONOR

The UK has released the first coin featuring King Charles III, who took the throne in September after the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II. Nearly 10 million of the 50-pence ($0.61) coins will be released. The image of Charles faces left, which is the opposite of the way his mother faced on coins.


Jonathan

CELEBRATING A LONG LIFE

The world's oldest living land animal just celebrated his 190th birthday. Jonathan the Seychelles giant tortoise feasted on a healthy cake on the island of St. Helena, where he has lived since the 1800s. "He's just been here, enjoying himself," said a caretaker. "He's fabulous."

A BIG REVEAL

On December 7, *Time* magazine named its person of the year: President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine. Zelensky was honored for leading his nation through a war that has been going on since Russia invaded Ukraine in February. *Time*, which has given the annual title since 1927, also honored "the spirit of Ukraine," as shown by its people.

Time's cover

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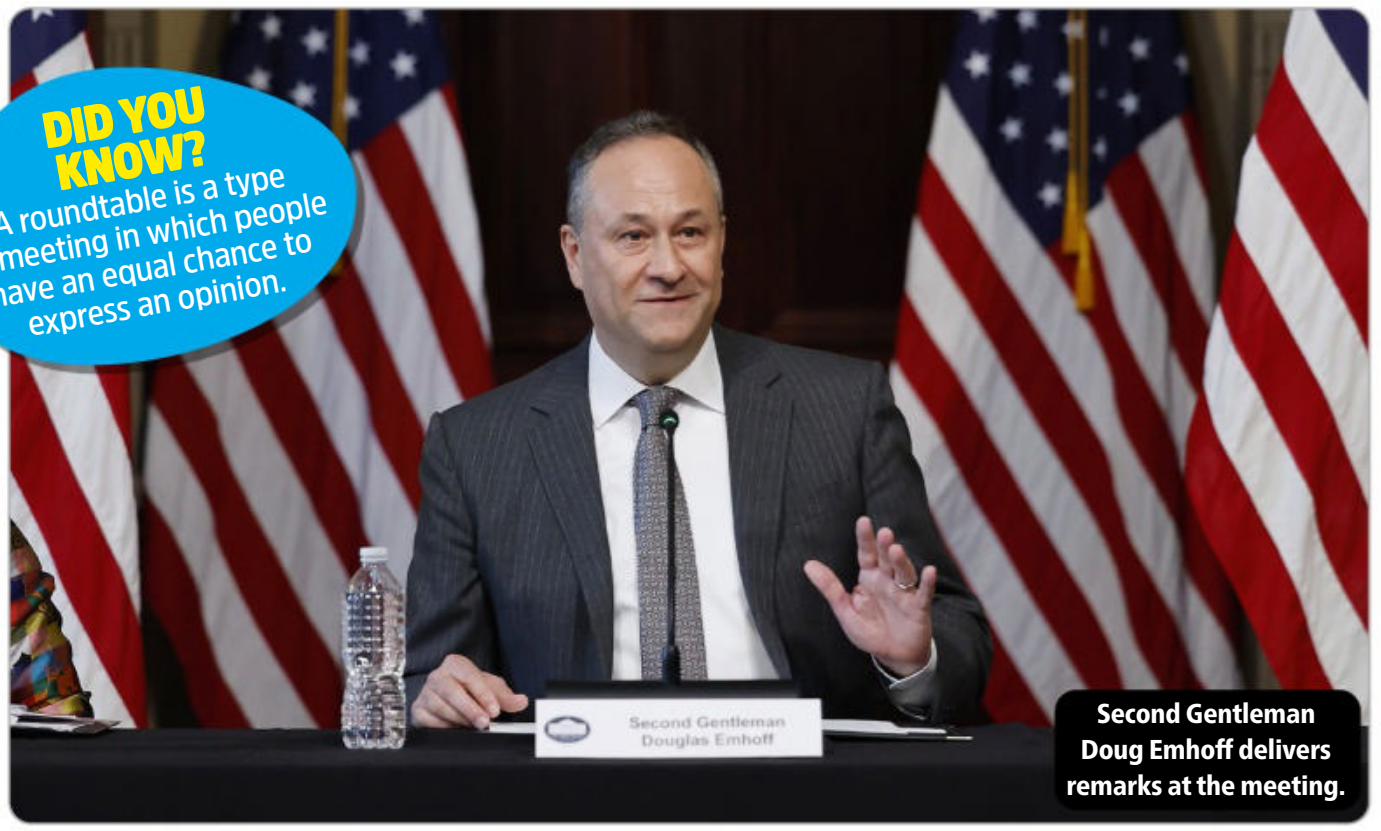


DID YOU KNOW?
A roundtable is a type of meeting in which people have an equal chance to express an opinion.

Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff delivers remarks at the meeting.

Biden signs bill into law

On December 13, President Joe Biden signed into law the Respect for Marriage Act. The "landmark civil rights bill," as Biden called it, protects people's right to marry, regardless of their gender or race. The bill had already cleared Congress (branch of government that makes laws) with support from Democrats and Republicans.

White House meeting on discrimination

On December 7, the White House held a meeting to discuss the rise in discrimination against Jewish people, known as antisemitism, that is occurring in the US. It was the first meeting on that topic ever held at the White House.

What happened?

The roundtable meeting was led by Doug Emhoff, the husband of Vice President Kamala Harris. He is the first person in US history to hold the title of Second Gentleman and the first Jewish spouse of a US President or Vice President. Jewish leaders, including rabbis and people from 13 Jewish groups, such as Jewish on Campus, attended. Government officials, including Deborah Lipstadt, special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, also participated.

Why was the meeting held?

US law enforcement officials have reported a rise in online threats and incidents of harassment and violence against Jewish people and against synagogues (Jewish houses of worship). There were 2,717 antisemitic incidents in 2021, according to the Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish organization that specializes in civil rights law. This is an increase of 34% compared to the previous year and is an all-time high, the group said.

What was the reaction?

Many attendees said they were grateful to the White House for confronting antisemitism. "By convening this important roundtable, the Biden administration has demonstrated that it recognizes the severity of the problem," said Ted Deutsch of the American Jewish Committee. Other leaders said the issue required even more attention and action than what a single meeting could accomplish. Sheila Katz, of the National Council of Jewish Women, said she wanted to see President Joe Biden and his administration battle antisemitism more consistently.

What will happen next?

Some activists called for the government to follow up the meeting with stronger action. To prevent hateful acts, "it takes boots on the ground," said Liora Rez, executive director of the group Stop Antisemitism. Emhoff emphasized that the White House's work to prevent antisemitism would continue. "For me today, this is not the end of the conversation, it's just the beginning," he said.

WORD OF THE WEEK

CONSERVATION

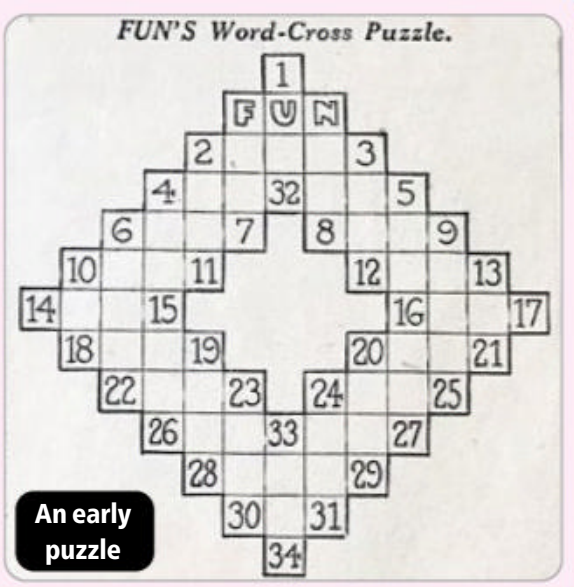
At the heart of the word "conservation" is the verb "conserve," meaning to "protect." Both words come from the Latin *con*, "together," and *servare*, to "keep." To conserve something, such as the environment, means to keep it together and safe.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

December 21, 1913

First crossword puzzle is published

On December 21, 1913, the first crossword puzzle was published in a US newspaper. Invented by a British farmer, the puzzle was called a "word-cross." It was diamond-shaped with 32 words and didn't have today's "across" and "down" entries. It wasn't a hit at first. Demand did not increase until a book of crossword puzzles was published more than 10 years later and sold 2 million copies.



An early puzzle

Raphael Warnock

Georgia elects Warnock to Senate

In a runoff election to fill a US Senate seat from Georgia, Raphael Warnock, a Democrat, defeated Republican Herschel Walker. The runoff was held because no candidate received 50% of the vote in November. Warnock had held the seat previously and was running for reelection. With Warnock's win, Democrats will control the Senate with 51 seats (which includes three Independents who usually vote with Democrats) to Republicans' 49.

Most searched terms in 2022

Google has revealed the most common terms that people in the US searched for on its platform in 2022. The most popular search was for "Wordle," the word game. Other top US searches included "election results," "Queen Elizabeth," and "Ukraine." The most searched movie was *Encanto*, the Disney animated film. The most searched song was "We Don't Talk About Bruno" from *Encanto*.

The choir rehearsing

Ukraine choir sings in New York

The Shchedryk Children's Choir from Ukraine performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City on December 4. The choir sang Ukrainian carols, including "Carol of the Bells." The popular holiday song was written by a Ukrainian composer in 1916 and was first performed in the US by the same choir at Carnegie Hall 100 years earlier. Proceeds from the concert went to helping Ukrainians in need.

A scene from *Sneakerella*

WOW! Sesame Street holds the record for the most Daytime Emmys awarded to a television show, with 122 wins.

Top awards in kids' TV presented

The first-ever Children's & Family Emmy Awards was held on December 11 to honor the year's best TV programming for young people. The awards had previously been part of the Daytime Emmys, a top prize in the television industry. This year, the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences decided to hold a separate awards ceremony due to the significant increase in programming for young people.

The televised event was held at the Wilshire Ebell Theater in Los Angeles, California. Serving as host was actor Jack McBrayer, who was nominated for Outstanding Host for the Apple TV+ show *Hello, Jack! The Kindness Show*.

Sneakerella, the movie musical from Disney+, won Outstanding Fiction Special, beating out *Better Nate Than Ever* and other specials. Heading into the ceremony, *Sneakerella* was tied for the most Emmy nominations with the Disney+ series *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, at 11 each.

LeVar Burton was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

The evening's top winner was the Netflix teen series *Heartstopper,* with four awards. Also from Netflix, *The Baby-Sitter's Club*, the TV adaptation of the popular book series of the same name, won for Outstanding Children's or Family Viewing Series.

Outstanding Non-Fiction Program went to *Who Are You, Charlie Brown?*, an Apple TV+ documentary about *Peanuts* comic strip creator Charles Schulz. Outstanding Animated Series went to Netflix's *City of Ghosts* about a group of kids who interview ghosts.

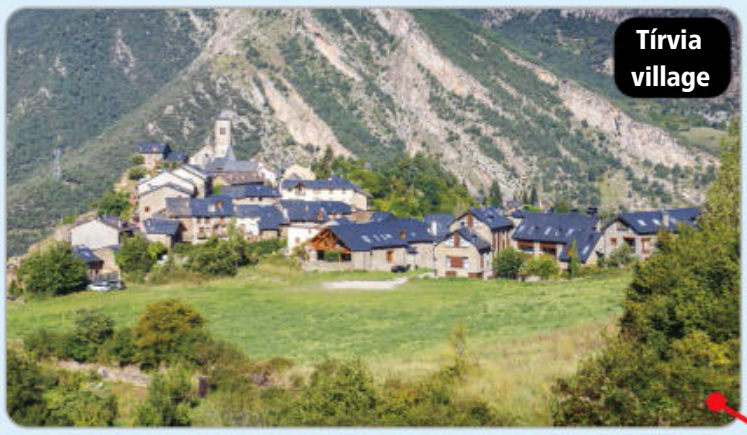
Another highlight was the Lifetime Achievement Award presented to LeVar Burton, winner of 13 previous Emmys. For more than 30 years, the actor and director educated thousands of children on the joy of reading with his PBS series *Reading Rainbow*. In his speech, Burton expressed his passion for reading and the importance of representing Black people on screen. "Part of my purpose here is to tell stories that uplift and enlighten," Burton told NPR.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Escaped cow runs into Virginia doctor's office" ***UPI***

GETTY IMAGES (4); BEN MARK HOLZBERG/DISNEY; REDUX; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); THE NEW YORK WORLD

Around the world


Tírvia village

Catalonia, Spain
Villages welcome refugees

Villages in Catalonia, Spain, are welcoming refugees (people forced to flee their home to escape danger). Government authorities are helping refugees to settle in small villages, ensuring that they have a home and a job. Under the new program, 24 refugee families so far have relocated. Orwa Skafe, who is from Syria and now lives in a mountaintop village in Tírvia, said, "I'm very happy here...I love nature."

The cemetery where the gold tongues were found

Quesna, Egypt
Mummies with gold tongues discovered

Several mummies with golden tongues have been found in an ancient cemetery near Quesna, Egypt. Archaeologists (scientists who study objects left by people long ago) suspect Egyptians, who believed gods were made of gold, placed gold tongues on mummies so they could speak to Osiris, a god who ruled over the Egyptian afterlife. The cemetery is thought to have been used between 300 BCE and 640 CE.

Bows made with brazilwood

Brazil
Halting illegal trade of violin bows

The Brazilian government is cracking down on violin bows made from brazilwood. Brazilwood has been used for centuries to make violin bows, but the plant it comes from—known as the "music tree"—is now endangered. The government wants to introduce stricter rules to halt the illegal trade of brazilwood instruments.

Dursey Island, Ireland
Islanders threaten to leave

Residents of Dursey Island said they may relocate if their cable car isn't fixed. The cable car, which connects the island to the mainland, has been closed since March for repairs. People can use the ferry, but it doesn't operate in bad weather. About six people live on Dursey. If they leave, it will be the first time no one has lived there in 420 years.

The cable car

Khartoum, Sudan
Call to end army rule

People in Sudan are protesting an agreement signed by the country's military government and civilian pro-democracy parties to give power back to civilian (non-military) leaders. The military took power in Sudan in 2021, which was followed by months of protests against military rule. Protesters are unhappy because the deal would mean the military would still have a say in the government's decisions.

Protesters in the capital, Khartoum

EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF TOURISM; GETTY IMAGES (6); BIG WORLD CINEMA/ALJAZEERA; 3XN/ADAM MØRK; SHUTTERSTOCK

Around the world

Removing Apollo

Paris, France
Statue removed for cleaning

A statue of Apollo, the ancient Greek god of the Sun, is being moved from the Palace of Versailles near Paris, France, for restoration. It will spend 18 months being cleaned and repaired before returning to Versailles. This is the first time the statue has been moved since 1671, when it was put there during the reign of King Louis XIV.

Health workers in Beijing

China
Government relaxes Covid restrictions

China's government relaxed its Covid rules, which had placed millions of people under strict lockdown. The changes followed landmark protests against the rules. People with Covid symptoms will no longer be sent to camps to be quarantined and can isolate at home instead. Major cities will also no longer require negative Covid tests in order for people to take public transportation.

The new competition

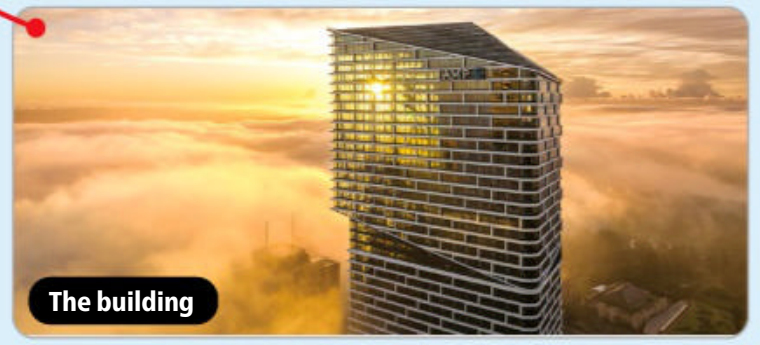
Kenya
Sports competition replaces lion hunt

Hundreds of young people in Kenya gathered for a sports competition intended to replace an annual lion hunt.
For years, young men of the Maasai tribe, in Kenya and Tanzania, have hunted lions. Environmentalists persuaded the tribe that the number of lions in Africa was decreasing and the big cats needed protecting. The new competition included events such as spear throwing and high jumping.

Rwanda
Hairstyle revived

A hairstyle called amasunzu, which features hair parted and styled into dramatic crests, is making a comeback in Rwanda. Worn by men and women, amasunzu used to be a popular way for Rwandans to express their identity, before the country became a European colony (when a country is controlled by people from somewhere else). It is hoped that the revival of amasunzu will preserve the tradition for future generations.

An amasunzu hairstyle takes shape.


The building

Sydney, Australia
Upcycled skyscraper wins award

An "upcycled" building in Sydney, Australia, has been named World Building of the Year 2022. Upcycling means reusing materials to make something new. The 676-foot Quay Quarter Tower was created from a 1970s skyscraper, which would otherwise have been knocked down. It's been called the "world's first upcycled high-rise building."

Are fake Christmas trees better than real ones?

Some people say artificial trees are better for the planet, but others want the real deal.

What you need to know

- **Pagans (people who worship nature) used to decorate their homes with evergreen trees in winter to signal that spring was coming soon.**
- **In the 1500s in Germany, people started decorating trees to celebrate Christmas. Queen Victoria made the trees popular in Britain in the 1800s.**
- **About 75% of US homes have a Christmas tree. In 2021, 84% of those were artificial.**
- **Christmas tree farmers are growing 25% fewer trees than in 2002.**

In the past, people who celebrated Christmas bought—or cut down—a fresh tree and decorated it with twinkling lights and ornaments. The crisp, clean scent of its needles and sap filled the living room. These days, however, often the only seasonal smell is the holiday cookies in the oven, because more and more people are buying artificial Christmas trees. Fake trees are made from materials such as metal, plastic, and wood. Their green needles don't fade and fall off over time, and they can be stored for most of the year and reused. But some people say they don't capture the holiday spirit. What do you think? Are fake Christmas trees better than real ones?

Yes—fake trees are less harmful

Chopping down trees harms the planet—at Christmas time or anytime. And once the holiday is over, the tree gets tossed, which is wasteful. There's no rule saying a Christmas tree has to be real—a fake one can look just as festive and be used again and again. Artificial trees cut holiday stress, too. Buying gifts and food for Christmas is expensive, and real trees aren't cheap. Fake ones are also easier to deal with. It's hard for lots of people to get a real tree into their home and water it all month. A reusable tree that doesn't harm the environment is simpler and just as cheerful.

No—a fresh-cut tree brings joy

A truly magical part of the Christmas holiday is the scent of a real tree. It's more genuine and traditional. And a real tree actually has environmental benefits. In the 10 years it can take for one to grow to full height, it's home to birds and insects and an important part of a forest. And let's not forget that some fake trees are made of plastic, manufactured in faraway countries, and shipped across the world—all terrible for the planet. In fact, many Christmas tree suppliers plant two or three trees for every one they cut down. That's a sustainable solution that doesn't sap the scent or spirit of Christmas.

YES Three reasons why fake Christmas trees are better than real ones

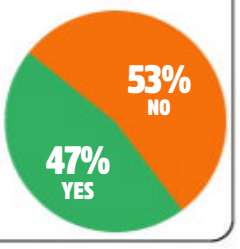
1. **Cutting down trees and throwing them away is harmful and wasteful.**
2. **No one says you have to use a real tree, especially now that artificial ones can look just as festive.**
3. **The holiday season is busy enough already, and a fake tree can save people time, hassle, and money.**

NO Three reasons why fake Christmas trees are not better than real ones

1. **Nothing says Christmas like the scent of a real tree—it's part of the holiday tradition.**
2. **During the years it takes for a Christmas tree to grow, it's home to birds and insects and plays an important role in nature.**
3. **Fake trees are made of materials that don't break down and travel across the world, which is bad for the environment.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if climate protests are going too far. More of you (53%) said they aren't, but nearly as many (47%) said they're problematic.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think fake Christmas trees are better than real ones or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results in Issue 143.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

Passion for podcasting

Noelia González wants to inspire Hispanic audiences with her NASA podcast.

As a 6-year-old growing up in Uruguay, Noelia González would pretend to be a news anchor. Now the multimedia journalist is the host and producer of *Universo Curioso de la NASA*, the first Spanish-language podcast from the US space agency.

The podcast, which means "NASA's Curious Universe" in English, features segments about the agency's work in space. It started as a bonus episode of the *Curious Universe* miniseries about the James Webb Space Telescope. *Universo Curioso* is part of NASA's mission to reach Spanish-speaking audiences in the US and around the world who may not be aware of the work the agency is doing.

González, age 33, is fluent in Spanish and English. She studied science writing at the University of California Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. Her reporting has taken her all over the world, from South America to Antarctica.

Throughout her career, González's work has highlighted people of Hispanic heritage who are making important contributions to the world. *Universo Curioso* provides behind-the-scenes access to Spanish-speaking NASA experts, such as engineer Ivette Rivera Aponte, who worked on the recently launched Artemis 1 mission to explore the Moon.

"I get to lead our listeners while they discover—or learn more about—NASA's impactful missions and the Hispanic and Latino people who contribute to making them possible," González told *The Week Junior*. "We aim to inform listeners and show them that space is for all."

González's new podcast

Noelia González

DID YOU KNOW? Franklin R. Chang Díaz became the first Hispanic astronaut at NASA in 1980.

A new global role

Volker Türk is the new high commissioner for human rights at the United Nations (UN, a group of 193 nations working for peace and cooperation). Shortly after taking his position, Türk visited the war-torn countries of Ukraine and Sudan and condemned human rights violations in Iran. Türk, who developed an interest in human rights at a young age and has worked at the UN for the past 30 years, said of his new role, "I will be guided by the impact we can have on people and their daily lives."

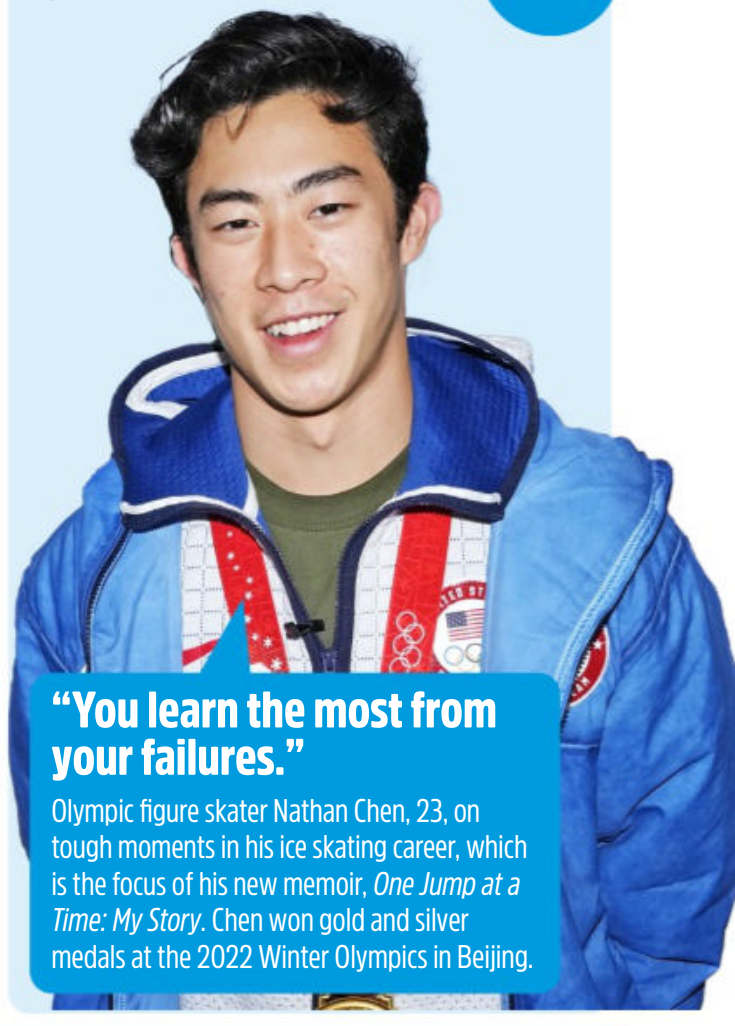
Volker Türk

Christine McVie

Music icon mourned

Christine McVie, the singer, songwriter, and keyboardist for the legendary rock band Fleetwood Mac, died on November 30 at age 79. Raised in the UK, McVie played piano starting at age 11. She was a part of Fleetwood Mac for more than 30 years and wrote many of their biggest hits, including "Everywhere" and "Little Lies." She also made three albums as a solo artist. In 1998, McVie was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame with the band. During the introduction, singer Sheryl Crow called McVie and bandmate Stevie Nicks "the First Ladies of Rock and Roll."

OVERHEARD



"You learn the most from your failures."

Olympic figure skater Nathan Chen, 23, on tough moments in his ice skating career, which is the focus of his new memoir, *One Jump at a Time: My Story*. Chen won gold and silver medals at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

KYLE HALE; NASA; GETTY IMAGES (3)

DID YOU KNOW?
There are about 4,000 bee species that are native to the US.

Honeybees like to organize.

Bees like to play

It's not just humans who enjoy playing—bumblebees do, too. A recent study shows that when given a choice between going straight for a snack or playing with a wooden ball first, bumblebees will sometimes choose the ball. Each bee in the study rolled the balls around for no reason other than to have fun.

The balls

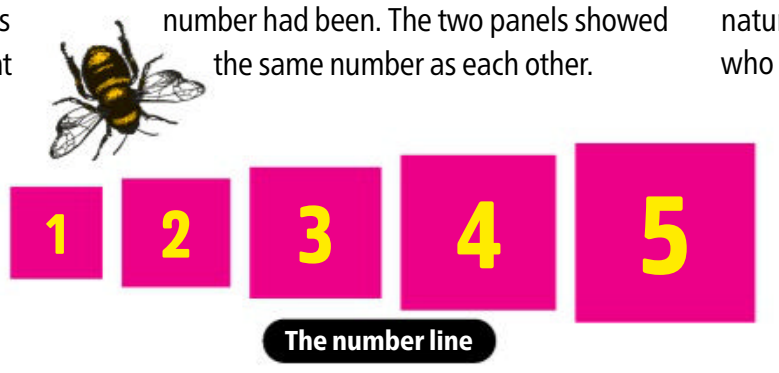
Bees order numbers from left to right

Honeybees prefer their numbers ordered from left to right, like many humans do, new research suggests. In the study, honeybees arranged numbers from smaller to larger, putting the smaller amounts on the left and the larger amounts on the right.

Research suggests that people often do this too, even children who haven't learned to count yet. This is referred to as a "mental number line." Scientists wanted to explore whether bees have a mental number line as well.

For the experiment, researchers had honeybees fly into a wood box. Then they enticed the bees with sugar water to fly to a panel with a "number" affixed to a wall of the box. (The number was actually a picture with geometric shapes, such as three triangles to represent the number 3.)

Once the bees were trained to fly to their number, researchers then tested them to see where they would place that number in a sequence. The researchers removed the number and the treat and put two new panels in the box, one on each side of the spot where the previous number had been. The two panels showed the same number as each other.



The number line

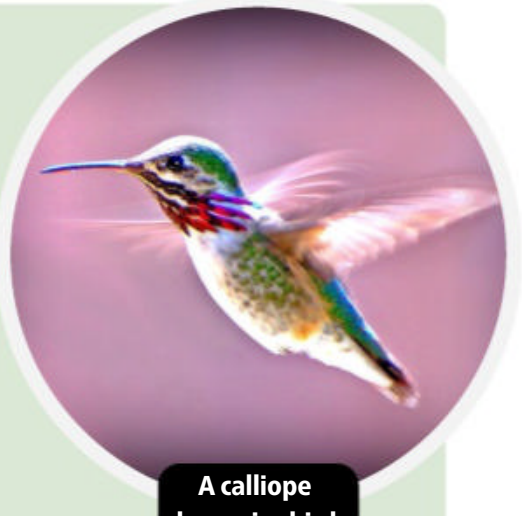
When the two panels showed a number smaller than their original number, bees flew to the left. When presented with a larger number, bees flew to the right. The finding suggests that bees do have a mental number line, said the researchers.

The next question was whether this finding helps settle a long-standing scientific argument about number lines—are they learned or natural behavior? Martin Giurfa, a professor who led the research, said the bee study shows strong evidence that the number line could be natural. Some scientists disagree, however, and say it's learned, pointing to the fact that people who speak some languages, such as Arabic and Hebrew, read, write, count, and order objects from right to left rather than left to right. Either way, Giurfa told Science News, "We are different from animals in some aspects, but we are very similar in others."

PLACE OF THE WEEK

Stanislaus National Forest, California

The Stanislaus National Forest covers nearly 900,000 acres in northern California. It was founded in 1897, making it one of the oldest national forests in the US. The name comes from the nearby Stanislaus River. The forest is a popular spot for camping. There are 78 lakes and more than 800 miles of streams and rivers, and more than 1,000 miles of hiking trails. Visitors may spot reptiles, birds such as the calliope hummingbird, and the small mammals like squirrels and chipmunks that inhabit the area.



A calliope hummingbird

FUN FACT
Adult male seals are called bulls and adult female seals are called cows.

Seal pups

Baby seals are born with rhythm

Just like human infants, baby seals can learn and make new sounds—which most mammals cannot do. Is it possible baby seals have a sense of rhythm too?

Biologists (scientists who study living things) wanted to find out. Rhythm, or flow, is a pattern of sound that can be repeated to a regular beat. Researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in the Netherlands conducted a study to see if seals would react to rhythm. The team created three different musical sequences, each with a unique tempo (speed), length, and regularity (organization). The researchers played the sequences for 20 baby seals.

They recorded how many times the seals turned their heads to look at the source of the music being played behind them. This indicated whether the seal found the music interesting. The seals turned their heads more often at longer, faster, regular rhythms.

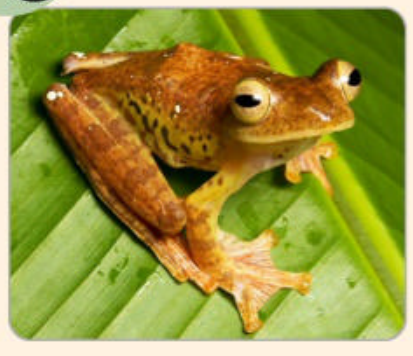
Scientists concluded that baby seals could distinguish between different musical patterns without training or rewards. Scientists want to research if perhaps other mammals have the same ability.

Animal of the week: Kirk's dik-dik antelope

A baby Kirk's dik-dik antelope, one of the world's smallest species of antelope, was recently born at the Folly Farm Adventure Park and Zoo in the UK. The calf, named Bounty, has been staying indoors and keeping warm with her mom.

- **LIFE SPAN:** About 17 years in captivity
- **HABITAT:** East Africa and southern Africa
- **SIZE:** Up to 16 inches tall and 13 pounds
- **DIET:** Plants, fruits, and berries
- **FUN FACT:** When frightened, they make a whistling noise that sounds like *zik-zik*.

Good week / Bad week



Harlequin frogs

As many as 32 species of harlequin frogs that were thought to have gone extinct have been rediscovered in the past two decades. Researchers said understanding how they survived could improve efforts to protect harlequin frogs.

Freshwater turtles

Freshwater turtles are increasingly being illegally captured and sold as pets, particularly female turtles of breeding age. This could leave turtles in the wild without enough animals to sustain their populations.

Ask a zookeeper: "Why do lions hold their cubs by their neck?"

Gabriel, 9, Illinois

Jenna Wingate
Zookeeper, Africa,
Cincinnati Zoo

A lion with her cub

Lions carry cubs by their neck to move them to safe places away from dangerous animals. Cubs have extra skin on their necks, called scruff. When a mother lion picks up a cub by the scruff, the cub relaxes all its muscles to allow its mother to move quietly and not alert predators.

Do you have a question for a zookeeper? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about the Cincinnati Zoo in Ohio at cincinnatizoo.org.

GETTY IMAGES (2); ALAMY (3); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); SAMADI GALPAYAGE; SHUTTERSTOCK

A smiling sight in

Snow has been shaped into human figures for hundreds of years.

Every winter in chilly locations worldwide, kids and adults participate in one of the earliest known art forms: creating people out of snow.

Michelangelo's snowman

A timeless art

As far back as the Middle Ages (about 500 to 1500 CE), people were making snowmen. Art supplies were expensive, but snow was free. In 1494, the artist Michelangelo, then age 19, was commissioned to sculpt a snowman for Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici, the ruler of Florence, Italy. A historian wrote that the courtyard of the Medici mansion was decorated with "a statue of snow, which was very beautiful." During the brutal winter of 1511 in Brussels, Belgium, a festival was held to boost spirits. Citizens built 110 snowmen that expressed their fears and hopes, and the festival became known as the Miracle of 1511.

La Résistance

Guards at the gate

Snowmen have also appeared in battle, with varying degrees of success. In 1690, guards at the gates of Fort Schenectady, a Dutch settlement in what is now upstate New York, built a pair of snowmen at their post when they left to escape a blizzard. Alas, the snowmen did nothing to stop an invading force. During the Franco-Prussian War (an 1870–1871 conflict between French and German forces), a snowperson played a bigger role. The artist Alexandre Falguière, who was serving in the French military, built a large snowwoman sitting on a snow cannon and named her *La Résistance* ("The Resistance"). She became a national symbol of France's fight to remain independent.

SKY HIGH
In 2008, a 122-foot snowwoman named Olympia was built in Maine using 13 million pounds of snow.

WOW!
The most snowmen built in one hour is 2,036. The record was achieved by 1,406 people in Japan in 2015.

Snowmen around the world

There are many different ways to build a snowperson. Here are a few examples of snowy traditions from across the globe.

Japan

In Japan, a *yukidaruma* (snowman) is made from two snowballs and doesn't have arms. This design was modeled after the *daruma*, a traditional Japanese doll that is a symbol of good luck.

GETTY IMAGES (8); ALAMY (2); LOOK AND LEARN; RANKIN/BASS PRODUCTIONS

wintertime

A hat, stick arms, and a carrot nose make a classic snowman.

Build a perfect snowman

The key to building a sturdy snowman starts with the snow, according to scientists. The perfect powder is moist to wet. Dry snow won't stick, and slushy snow won't hold a shape. Build your snowman on level ground and in a shady spot to keep it around longer.

FUN FACT
In 1876, a wealthy woman in Paris wrote in her will that her entire fortune should be used to put clothes on the snowmen in the streets.

Canada

At the Quebec Winter Carnival, a character named Bonhomme Carnaval has greeted visitors since 1955. Bonhomme is short for *bonhomme de neige*, which means snowman.

Switzerland

A snowman predicts the weather at the annual Sechseläuten festival at winter's end. It features Böögg, a huge cotton snowman filled with firecrackers. The faster Böögg explodes, the hotter summer will be.

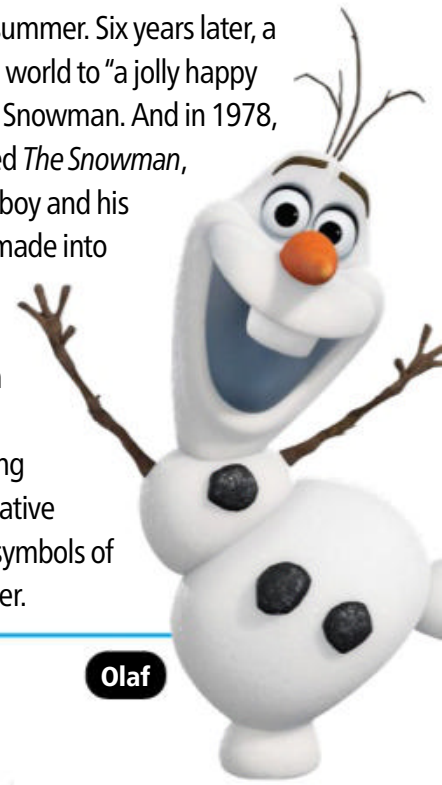
A postcard from about 1900

'Tis the season

In the 19th century, the marriage between Queen Victoria of the UK and Prince Albert, who was born in Germany, increased the popularity of German Christmastime traditions such as ice skating and building snowmen. Today, these cheerful characters are strongly linked to winter holidays and the joy of the season. Each year at winter festivals—such as the Sapporo Snow Festival in Japan, the World Snow Festival in Switzerland, the Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival in China, and the World Snow Sculpting Championship in Minnesota—people build amazing snow sculptures that celebrate the beauty of winter.

Brought to life

Snowmen have also appeared in stories for hundreds of years. In 1861, the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen wrote a fairy tale about a snowman who falls in love with a stove. A 1944 animation called *Der Schneemann* ("The Snowman" in German) featured a snowman longing to experience summer. Six years later, a hit song introduced the world to "a jolly happy soul" named Frosty the Snowman. And in 1978, Raymond Briggs created *The Snowman*, a picture book about a boy and his snowman, which was made into an animated film. From the legend of the Abominable Snowman to Olaf from *Frozen* to the snow family standing in a child's yard, the creative creatures are timeless symbols of imagination and wonder.



Olaf

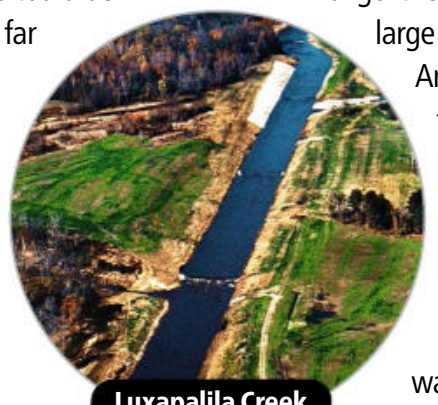
DINO SIZE
The largest known Deinocheirus, a type of dinosaur, was as tall as a three-story building.

A rendering of a Deinocheirus dinosaur

Big birdlike dinos lived in America

They do not yet have names, but dinosaurs that looked like massive birds seemed to have inhabited North America about 85 million years ago. Paleontologists (scientists who study fossils) discovered bones from at least two unknown species along Luxapalila Creek in what is now Mississippi. The dinosaurs could be the largest of their type found so far on the continent.

The collection of fossils mainly included foot and leg bones. When scientists compared them to similar bones from other species, they matched ornithomimosaurs, reptiles that looked like ostriches with long front limbs, front claws, and tails. But based on the size of these bones, the creatures they belonged to would have been much larger than any ornithomimosaur previously found in North America.



Luxapalila Creek in Mississippi

The researchers examined the structure of each bone to see how the dinosaurs had grown as they aged. This helped them estimate each dino's size and age. Based on these clues, one of the animals appeared to be similar to an ornithomimosaur called Gallimimus, which was up to 20 feet long and weighed nearly half a ton. The other was most like Deinocheirus, a duck-beaked ornithomimosaur nearly twice that size (about as big as a Tyrannosaurus).

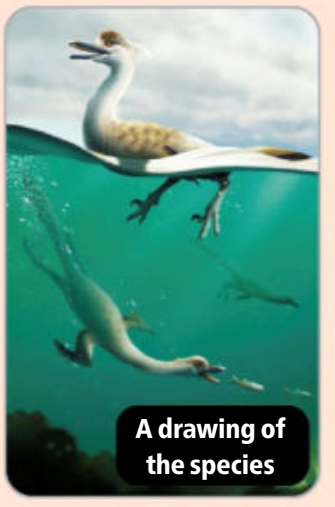
During the Cretaceous period (about 145 to 66 million years ago), Deinocheirus lived in Mongolia. Scientists didn't know that such large ornithomimosaurs were in North America then. Now it seems that there were multiple species living side by side.

The finding was even more surprising because it took place in the eastern US. About 100 million years ago, North America was split in two by a shallow sea. Today, paleontologists mostly find dinosaur fossils in the western half of the continent, where fewer cities and forests cover up the ancient rocks and remains.

Scientists hope future finds in the east will help them learn how dinosaur communities varied across the continent. For example, different groups of ornithomimosaurs may have had different food sources or habitats. And if a more complete skeleton of each species is found, scientists may finally be able to give these dinos a name.

A diving dinosaur

A newly discovered dinosaur species probably hunted like a penguin or duck in the water, researchers say. Natovenator polydontus had a body similar to the size and shape of a duck. Its 100 sharp teeth and long neck suggested that it ate fish, and its sleek body and flattened ribs would have made it well suited to diving and swimming.



A drawing of the species

The fossil dates to the Upper Cretaceous period (about 100 million to 66 million years ago) and was found in Mongolia's Gobi Desert, which contained some lakes and streams at the time. More research will be needed to confirm whether Natovenator was indeed one of the first non-bird dinosaurs to dive for its dinner.

Scientists find closest known black hole to Earth

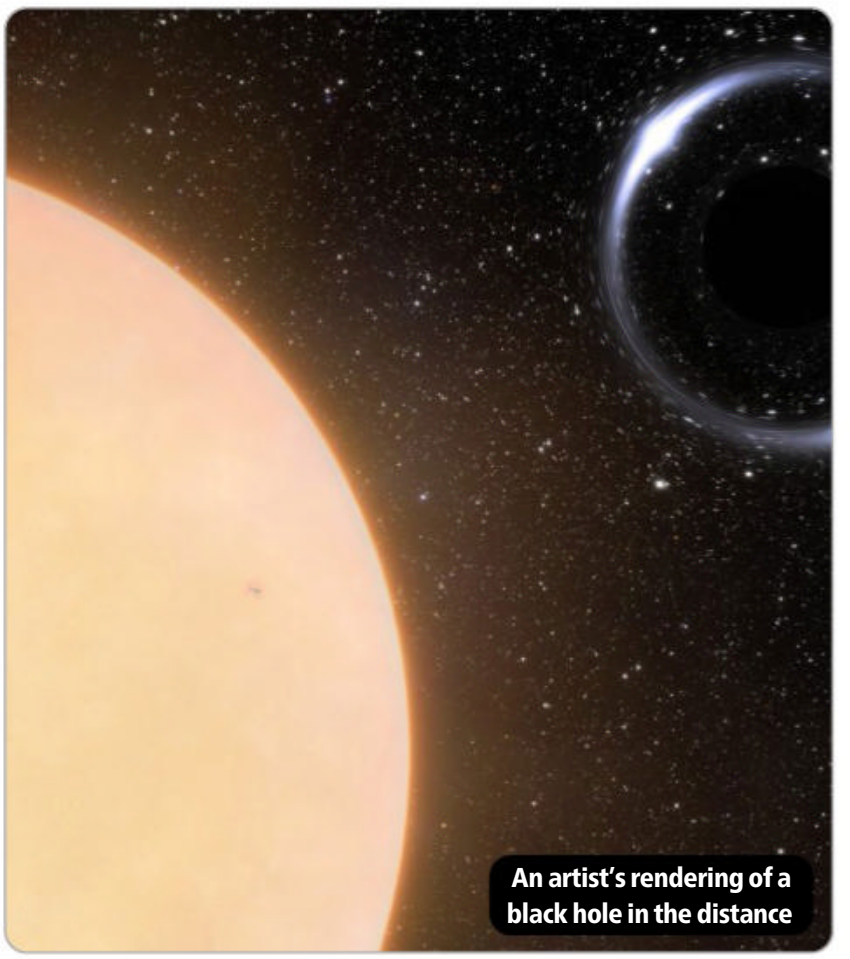
Scientists have found the closest black hole to Earth discovered so far. Named Gaia BH1, it is three times closer to our planet than the previous closest known black hole. Gaia BH1 weighs about 10 times the mass of the Sun and is about 1,600 light-years (the distance light travels in one Earth year, about 6 trillion miles) from Earth in the Ophiuchus constellation (a group of stars in a pattern).

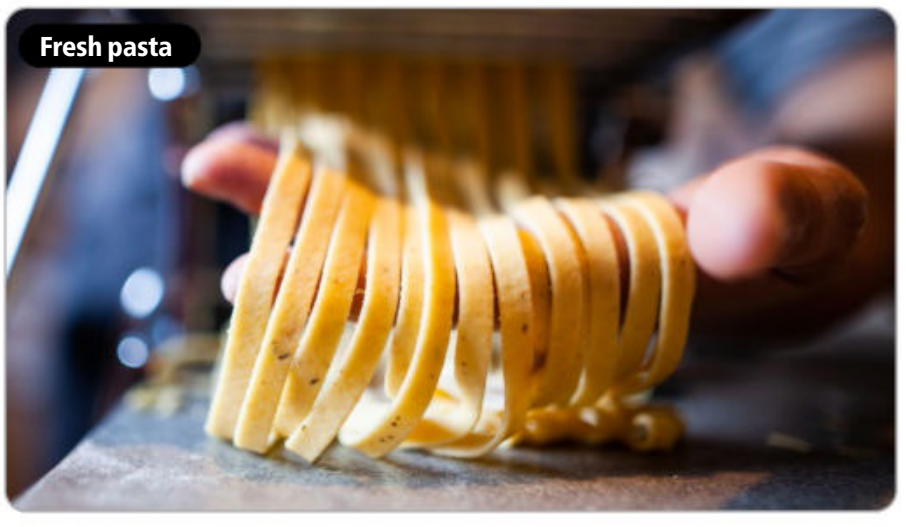
DID YOU KNOW?
Experts say there could be about 100 million black holes in our Milky Way galaxy.

A black hole is an area in space where gravity is so strong that even light cannot escape it. Most known black holes are active, which means they are absorbing gas from nearby stars. This forms a ring around the black hole that scientists can see in x-rays. However, Gaia BH1 is a dormant black hole, meaning it is not absorbing material from stars.

To find Gaia BH1, a team of astronomers led by Kareem El-Badry looked at a map of stars taken by the European Space Agency's Gaia spacecraft. They found one star that appeared to be affected by gravity from an unseen object nearby. Follow-up observations confirmed that this object was a black hole.

El-Badry believes there are likely to be undiscovered black holes that are even closer to Earth and hopes to find more when the Gaia spacecraft releases more data in 2025. "Just finding one...suggests there are a bunch more to be found," he told Science News.


An artist's rendering of a black hole in the distance


Fresh pasta

Making pasta that lasts longer

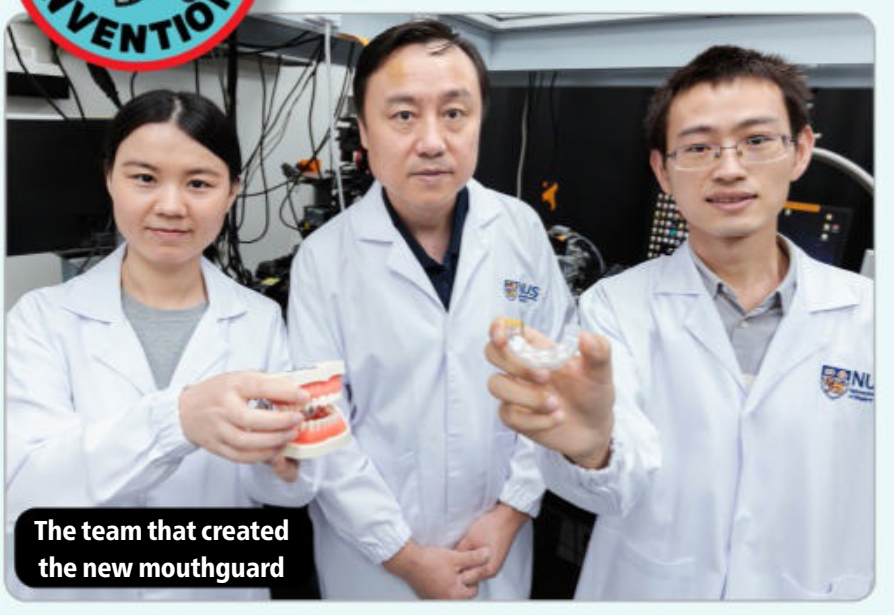
Scientists in Italy have figured out a way to make pasta last longer. They used fresh pasta, which is soft and made with eggs, rather than dried pasta from a box. Fresh pasta stays edible for about 30 to 90 days. Mold forms when it is exposed to water and oxygen.

The team put one batch of the pasta in its regular plastic packaging. The second batch was wrapped in thicker packaging, which allowed less water and oxygen in. They also adjusted the amount of carbon dioxide and nitrogen gases inside the packaging, which affect how much bacteria (tiny, living single-cell organisms) can grow. For the third batch, they added probiotics (good bacteria) to the pasta dough.

All the pasta was stored at the same temperature. While mold grew on the first set at 90 days, the others had none after 120 days. The team is refining the process and hopes their work will help decrease food waste.

AMAZING INVENTION

A mouthguard that controls devices


The team that created the new mouthguard

Researchers in Singapore and China have designed a new mouthguard that allows people who don't have use of their hands to send text messages, control a wheelchair, or even play an electronic keyboard.

The device has pressure-sensitive pads that the wearer activates by biting down. Each pad emits a certain color of light, which changes depending on where and how hard the wearer bites down. The light patterns are sent to a computer, which converts them into commands it can execute. The mouthguard is currently about 98% accurate.

INTERNATIONAL GEMINI OBSERVATORY/NOIRLAB/NSF/AURA/J. DA SILVA/SPACEENGINE/M. ZAMANI; GETTY IMAGES; NUS; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES; U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS; YUSIK CHOI/HANDOUT

Our contest winner!

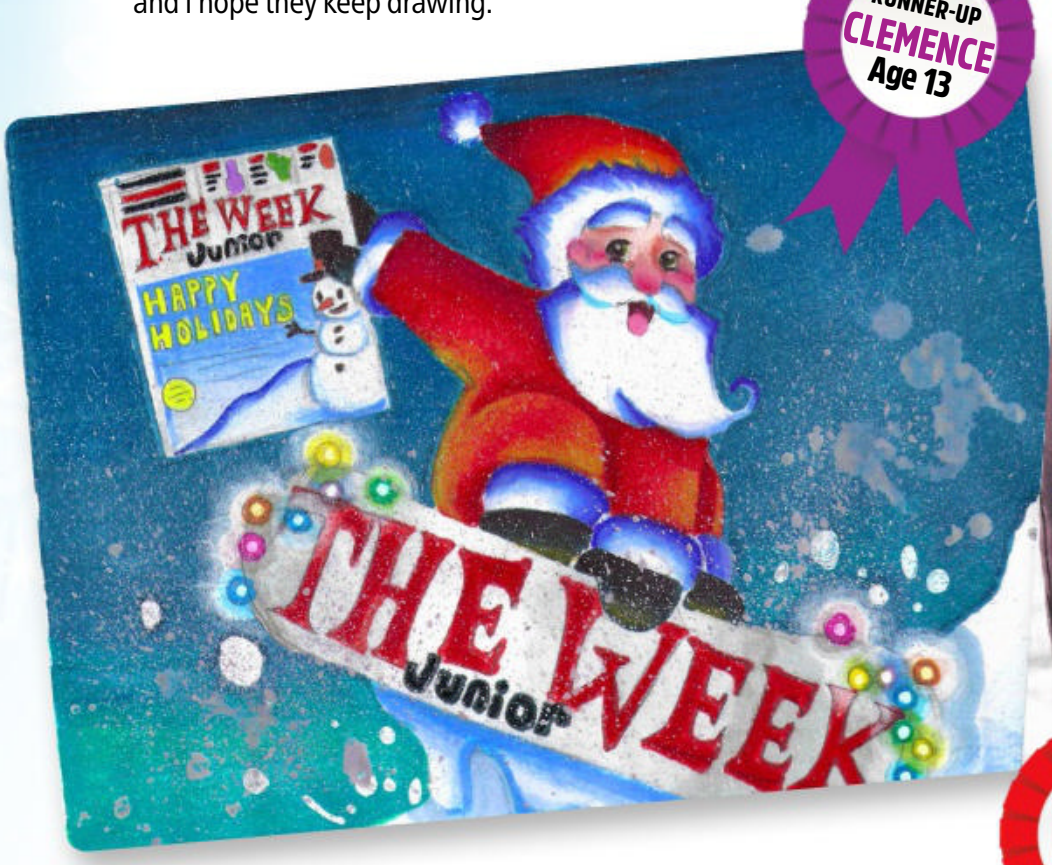
For *The Week Junior*'s Winter Cover Contest, we invited readers to create a cover for the magazine that celebrates the season. We received nearly 700 submissions and were impressed by the creativity that went into all of them.

The contest was judged by Editor-in-Chief Andrea Barbalich, Creative Director Dean Abatemarco, and award-winning children's book creators Kat Fajardo, Jeff Kinney, and Jo Rioux. Fajardo is a cartoonist whose most recent book is the graphic novel *Miss Quinces*. Kinney is the creator of the best-selling Diary of a Wimpy Kid series. Rioux is an author and illustrator who launched her Cat's Cradle book series this year. We thank our esteemed judges for sharing their time and expertise!

Narrowing down the entries to the 10 finalists shown on these two pages and ultimately choosing a winner was difficult. In the end, it was Ellery's entry, "Birdie, It's Cold Outside," that earned the grand prize for its colorful depiction of birds gathering together on a chilly day.

Congratulations to Ellery, runners-up Clemence and Hadley, the finalists, and all our readers who entered. "This was an amazing group of submissions," Abatemarco said. "Each of these artists should be very proud of their work, and I hope they keep drawing."

"Ellery grabs our eyes and hearts with this piece. The bold color choices liven up the cool snowy background. I love the care that went into making the birds identifiable! The way they gather around to hear a story is heartwarming." —Author and illustrator Jo Rioux



"This cover is a blast of wintry fun! It's an original idea and cool execution. The technique is seriously impressive, and I love the idea that Santa snowboards during his off-time!" —Author and illustrator Jeff Kinney

"This is very snug and inviting! I like the use of framing, with the windows separating the chilly background from the warm and cozy interior. I want to be there!" —Author and cartoonist Kat Fajardo

FINALIST
ANDREW
Age 13

FINALIST
AUDREY
Age 11

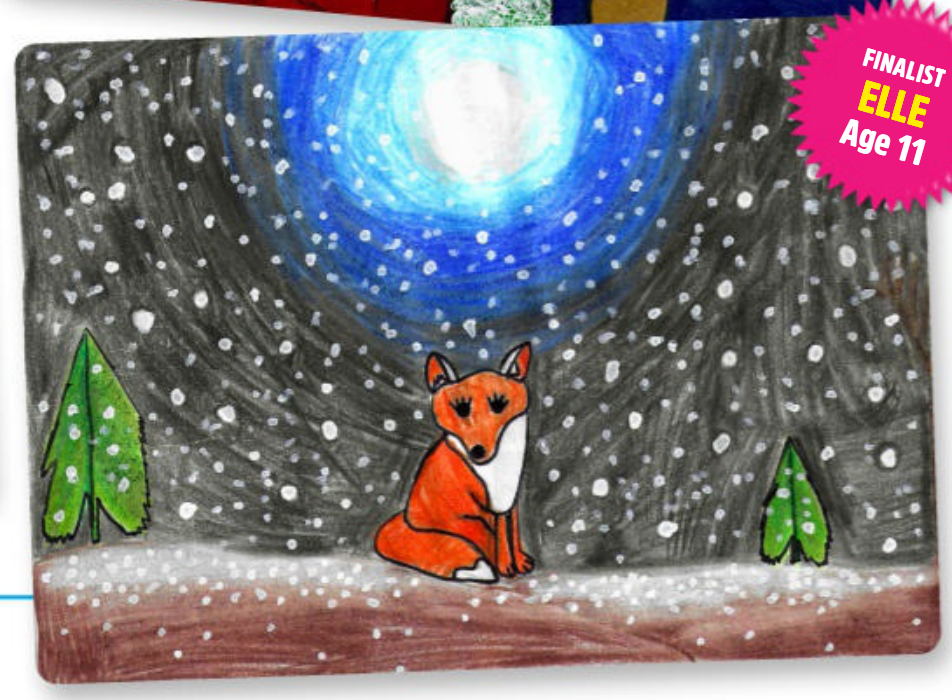
FINALIST
SAVINI
Age 9

FINALIST
CLAIRE
Age 13

FINALIST
CLAIRE
Age 8

FINALIST
LOLA
Age 10

FINALIST
ELLE
Age 11



Morocco in action

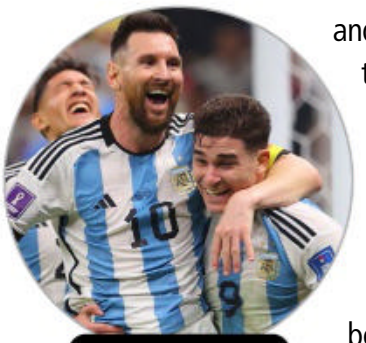
FUN FACT
France was the first defending World Cup champion to reach the semifinals since 1998.

Women's soccer news

A professional women's soccer league is coming to Canada in 2025. The effort is being led by former Canadian national team star Diana Matheson. The league will have eight teams, and two of the founding clubs are the Calgary Foothills and the Vancouver Whitecaps FC.

Exciting World Cup comes to a close

Since it began on November 20, the 2022 FIFA World Cup has been delivering thrills—and heartbreak—to soccer fans around the globe. The final match is set for December 18, and when *The Week Junior* went to press, Argentina was waiting to find out which team they would face in the final: France (the defending champions) or Morocco (the first African country to ever qualify for a World Cup semifinal).


Lionel Messi, left, and Julián Álvarez

Argentina made the finals by beating Croatia, 3–0, on December 13. Croatia was the World Cup runner-up in 2018 and ranked 12th this year, while Argentina was ranked third. In the match, Argentina's star Lionel Messi scored the first goal on a penalty kick. With that, he became his country's all-time leading World Cup goal scorer. Minutes later, Argentina's striker Julián Álvarez got the ball from Messi midfield, charged past defenders, and scored to put his team up 2–0. In the second half, he scored again with a huge assist by Messi.

The quarterfinals were marked by close scores. The two matches played on December 9 were decided on penalty kicks because the teams were tied after both regulation time and extra time (overtime). In the first match, Croatia beat Brazil, the number one team heading into the tournament. Croatia's goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic saved two of the three penalty shots Brazil attempted, and Croatia won the shootout, 4–2. Later, Argentina beat the eighth-ranked Netherlands in a 4–3 shootout.

The next day, 22nd-ranked Morocco pulled off a stunning upset by beating ninth-ranked Portugal, 1–0. Youssef En-Nesyri scored the lone goal, and Morocco's goalkeeper Yassine Bounou made three saves in the win.

In the last quarterfinal match, fourth-ranked France beat fifth-ranked England, 2–1. Early in the second half, France was up, 1–0, then England tied the score on a penalty kick by star player Harry Kane. After France went up 2–1, England had a chance to tie it up in the last few minutes when Kane was given another penalty kick opportunity. The ball flew over the crossbar, and France held onto the lead for the win.

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

On December 10, the eighth-ranked University of Alabama men's team came back from being down by 15 points to beat the number-one-ranked University of Houston, 71–65. In women's basketball the next day, the 20th-ranked University of Maryland upset the sixth-ranked University of Connecticut (UConn), 85–78. It was Maryland's first win over UConn in the basketball program's history.

University of Maryland

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

On December 11, San Francisco 49ers quarterback Brock Purdy made his first career start and led his team to a 35–7 win over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Purdy was the last pick in last year's National Football League draft.

TRACK & FIELD

American hurdler Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone was named the World Athletics female Athlete of the Year for 2022. She is the first American to win the award since 2019.

DID YOU KNOW?
Ancient ice skates were made with animal bones for blades.

Isabeau Levito

US skaters medal at big event

From December 8 to December 11, the International Skating Union (ISU) Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final was held in Torino, Italy. It featured many of the world's top skaters and is one of the most important competitions of the year. Americans took home medals in men's and women's singles, pairs, and ice dance, which had never happened before in a Grand Prix Final.

This fall, skaters took part in Grand Prix events and earned points based on their performances. The top six skaters in each discipline made the finals. Russia is banned from competitions due to the war in Ukraine, and skaters from China did not participate in the Grand Prix, so the finalists were mostly from Japan, the US, Canada, and Italy.

In men's singles, the competitors included the current senior world champion, Shoma Uno of Japan, and the reigning junior world champion, Ilia Malinin of the US. Malinin, age 18, is famous for being the first skater to land a quadruple axel jump in competition. Uno dominated from the start and won gold. Malinin was in fifth place going into his final performance, where he did four successful quad jumps, including an axel, and was able to take home the bronze. Sota Yamamoto of Japan won the silver.

In women's singles, American Isabeau Levito, who is age 15 and the reigning junior world champion, proved she is a star. She was the fifth-place qualifier for the event but performed well and won silver. Mihara Mai of Japan took gold, while Loena Hendrickx of Belgium won bronze.

The other American standouts were Alexa Knierim and Brandon Frazier, who won the silver in pairs, and Madison Chock and Evan Bates, who won the silver in ice dance.

COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Alisa Karlsons**

Team: **Gunston Soccer Club, Yellow Jackets**

"My mom is my coach and I love it. She has been coaching me since I was 5. Over the years, my best friends have joined the team. We may not be the best team, but we are pretty good. This year my mom led us to the championship. We lost in the last 15 minutes, which is sad, but we still had a really good time."
Annie, 9, Virginia

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com.* Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Adriaan Wildschutt

AGE: 24 SPORT: RUNNING
TEAM: HOKA NAZ ELITE

Starting line One day in 10th grade I was so bored. My brother was a runner, so I went with him to training. His team would run 20 minutes out and back on a mountain pass and see how far they could go. It was tiring but fun. I kept going every week. I liked having the ability to see my progress.

Big move I'm from South Africa. I came to the US for college because I was recruited by Zola Budd, an Olympic runner and world-record holder from South Africa who was coaching at Coastal Carolina University. After she retired, I transferred to Florida State University.

Language barrier I grew up speaking Afrikaans. When I got to the US, I could understand English, but speaking it was hard. People in America never really make fun of you if you say something wrong. That helped me a lot.

On the go When I'm in full training, I probably run an average of 16 or 17 miles a day for a total of between 90 and 100 miles a week. When I'm not running, I like playing chess. It's mental exercise.

Bonus perks What I enjoy most about running is that it's basically free therapy. It takes your mind away from a lot. Being on a team also gives you opportunities to travel to different countries.

Next goals I want to beat the South African record in the 10K, and I want to qualify for the World Championships for cross country and track.

His advice Choose a sport that makes you happy. Don't do it because a parent forces you or because you're worried about disappointing them.

GETTY IMAGES (2); FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

FUN FACT
The name Matilda is of Old German origin and means "mighty in battle."

Alisha Weir, left, and scenes from *Matilda*

Matilda the Musical arrives

An adaptation of the award-winning show, based on a novel by Roald Dahl, is in theaters now and will begin streaming soon.

Over the years, author Roald Dahl's best-selling 1988 novel about a brilliant girl, *Matilda,* has been turned into a film and a stage musical. Now there is a movie based on the show. Netflix's *Matilda the Musical* is currently playing in select theaters and will begin streaming on the platform on December 25.

Fans of the book and previous adaptations of the story will notice some differences between those versions and the latest one, but the main plot is generally the same. In the new film, clever, book-loving Matilda (played in the film by Alisha Weir, now age 13) lives with her neglectful, self-absorbed parents. When she begins attending school at Crunchem Hall, she discovers it is run by a cruel principal, Miss Trunchbull. As Matilda makes friends and gets to know her caring teacher Miss Honey, she decides to push back against Miss Trunchbull's evil ways and fight for what's right.

Roald Dahl

The stage version of *Matilda the Musical*, with music and lyrics by composer Tim Minchin, opened in London, UK, in 2011 and became an award-winning hit. A production of the show opened on Broadway in New York City in 2013. It won four Tonys (top theater award). The Broadway show closed in 2017, but *Matilda* is still running in London. Minchin said he is happy with the way the film honors the stage musical and told the BBC it "speaks to people of all ages."

Minchin said the character of Matilda is everything he could want in a hero: "She stands up to bullies on behalf of those she loves." Weir told *The Week Junior* she also admires Matilda's courage and said the film's main message is to "stand up for yourself and be strong." She added, "Even if you're little, you can still do as much as adults can do."

3 more Dahl adaptations

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Filmmaker Tim Burton put his spin on the Roald Dahl story in 2005. When Charlie wins a tour of Willy Wonka's factory, he discovers strange things happen inside.

Fantastic Mr. Fox

Award-winning director Wes Anderson made this 2009 stop-motion animation film. It follows Mr. Fox, who uses his smarts to save his family from three evil farmers.

The BFG

This 2016 film mixes live-action and computer-generated animation. When 10-year-old Sophie meets the Big Friendly Giant (BFG), the pair team up to try to stop other giants from taking over the human world.

DID YOU KNOW?
Star-nosed moles are the world's fastest eaters and can smell underwater.

A short film about love and kindness

An animated short film based on the book *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse* is coming to Apple TV+ on December 25. It is about a boy who is lost and afraid but gets comforting wisdom from animals he meets as he looks for his home.

British illustrator and artist Charlie Mackesy, the author of the book, co-wrote and co-directed the film. He said the original inspiration for his book came from drawings he made and sent to friends. He put them in a book so more people could enjoy them, and it became a bestseller.

The story's lessons, such as "Asking for help isn't giving up. It's refusing to give up," didn't come to Mackesy all at once, he told *The Week Junior*. "I just kept drawing and writing and they emerged," he said. "I think we all have things deep within us if we dare to listen." Mackesy said that at first he didn't think the book had enough in it to become a film, but there ended up being too much. "We had to carefully select what we felt was important and keep the gentle pace," he said.

There are many important messages in the film, but there are some specific ones Mackesy would like kids to take away from it. "I hope very much that it helps children feel good about themselves, loved, and enough as they are," he said. "I hope it inspires friendships and shows that the greatest things in life are kindness and love."

MOVIE NIGHT

If you're looking for a film to watch with family or friends, consider this pick of the week.

The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) PG
(Disney+)

This musical-comedy is an adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic *A Christmas Carol*, which was published in 1843. It stars Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy, The Great Gonzo, and other Muppets. The story follows greedy Ebenezer Scrooge (human actor Michael Caine), who works his employees too hard, despises Christmas, and refuses to help people in need. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by the Ghosts of Christmases Past, Present, and Future. The Ghost of the Past reminds Scrooge of a time when he was more innocent, and the Ghost of the Present shows him how his bitterness has hurt people in his town. The Ghost of the Future shows Scrooge the dark fate that awaits him because of his actions. Will he be inspired to change his ways?

THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST

Puss in Boots: The Last Wish
(In theaters December 21)

The legendary sword-fighting cat from the *Shrek* films is down to the last one of his nine lives in this new animated movie. He sets out on an epic journey to find a mythical star that can restore his life count. With other characters searching for the star too, his mission won't be easy.

Snow Day
(Paramount+)

This new musical reimagines a comedy from 2000. It follows a group of kids who are thrilled when school is closed for a snow day. Hal seeks his crush's attention, while his sister Natalie tries to stop the local plow driver from clearing the streets so there can be a second day off.

Down to Earth with Zac Efron
(Netflix)

Actor Zac Efron has been traveling the world with wellness expert Darin Olien in search of eco-friendly ways to live. In the new season of this documentary series, they explore Australia's unique environments, meet with innovators, and try locally sourced food.

APPLE TV+; DREAMWORKS ANIMATION; PHILLIPE BOSSE/PARAMOUNT+; COURTESY OF NETFLIX; DISNEY; ON LEFT PAGE: DAN SMITH/NETFLIX (3); GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY (3)

FUN FACT
In 2020, a buried chest of treasures worth $2 million was found in the Rocky Mountains of the US.

Dragon Quest Treasures

Treasure hunt with monsters

Dragon Quest Treasures is a new role-playing game in the Dragon Quest series. It was recently released for the Nintendo Switch.

Dragon Quest launched in 1986 in Japan and came to the US in 1989 as Dragon Warrior. There are now 11 games in the main Dragon Quest series, as well as spin-off series and one-off games. The series's turn-based gameplay, battle mode, and exciting quests influenced many other games, including Pokémon. There are TV shows, movies, comic books, and novels based on the story in the game.

Dragon Quest Treasures is a prequel to the 11th game of the main series, Dragon Quest XI S. The new game explores the childhood adventures of side character Erik and his sister, Mia, who live on a Viking ship. After Erik frees two animal-like spirits, Purrsula the flying cat and Porcus the winged pig, the siblings and the creatures end up on the magical islands of Draconia. Once they get there, Erik and Mia begin an epic treasure hunt with Purrsula and Porcus as their guides.

You can play the game as either sibling. Your big goal is to find Draconia's Seven Dragonstones. As your group explores, you'll meet monsters such as friendly slimes and massive giants. Each monster has its own magical powers that can help in the search for loot. When you have to fight enemies, the monsters assist with that, too.

Each piece of treasure has a value, and some are worth more than others. Your gang's rank increases as your collection grows. You can swap in different monsters to help with quests and to make sure you discover the Dragonstones before your rivals do.

Purrsula

PODCAST OF THE WEEK

ESCAPE THE HAUNTED HOUSE

tinyurl.com/TWJUS-HauntedHouse

This is part of Pinna's interactive audio series for kids, which makes you the story's main character and gives you control over the action. In this one, you have five minutes to escape a haunted house or be trapped forever. Your verbal responses to yes or no questions will determine how it ends.

APP OF THE WEEK

TAYASUI SKETCHES

Apple App Store, Google Play

Create realistic-looking digital art on your smartphone or tablet with this app. You can draw or paint with more than 20 tools, including watercolor wet brushes and a color eyedropper. The app also allows you to import photos, layer images, and easily share your final work.

CHANNEL OF THE WEEK

BBC EARTH KIDS

tinyurl.com/TWJUS-EarthKids

This YouTube channel is filled with fun videos related to science and nature. Some of the featured series include *Bugface*, where people agree to have mystery critters placed on their faces, the drawing tutorial *Earth Sketch Pad*, and *Deadly 60*, which highlights dangerous animals.

BBC Earth Kids hosts

ARMOR PROJECT/BIRD STUDIO/SQUARE ENIX (2); PINNA; TAYASUI; BBC EARTH KIDS VIA YOUTUBE

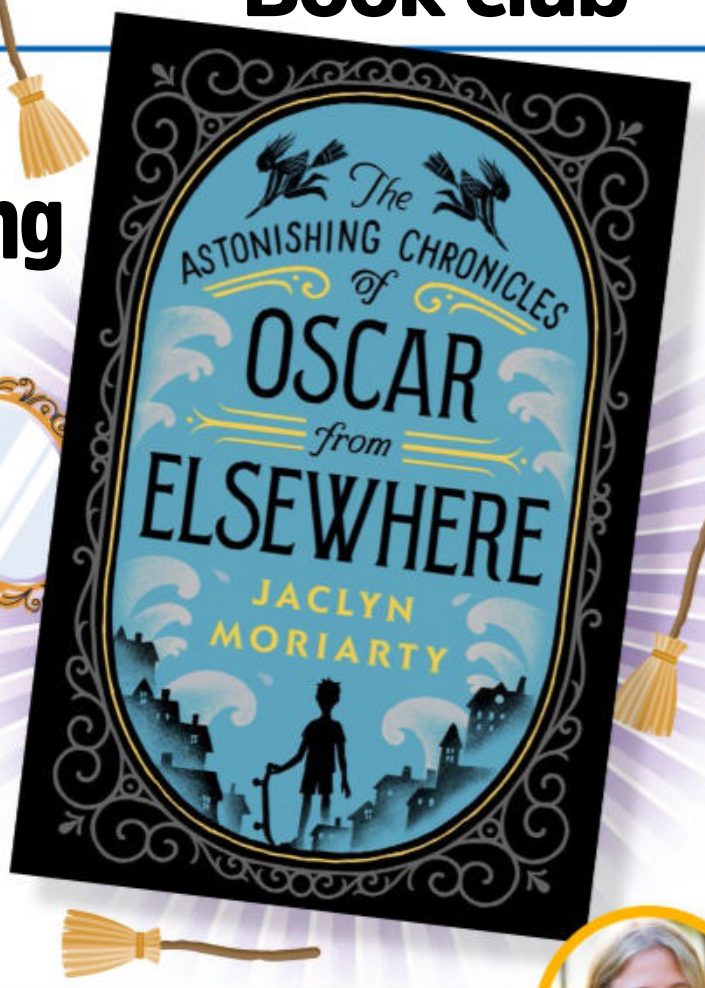
BOOK OF THE WEEK

The Astonishing Chronicles of Oscar from Elsewhere

By Jaclyn Moriarty

(Levine Querido)

When Oscar comes across a mirror at a skate park that supposedly can take him to the best skate park ever, he tries it. He looks at himself in the mirror and is transported to a city of elves. There, he meets Imogen, who tells Oscar the city is under an evil spell. They must find nine pieces of a key from nine different people to break it. If they don't, Oscar will be trapped in the elf world forever. Will he get home? The story is told from Oscar's and Imogen's point of view. Although this book is the fourth in the Kingdoms and Empires series, you can enjoy reading it without having read the previous ones.



WIN A BOOK!

We're giving away five copies of *Oscar from Elsewhere*.

For a chance to win, send your name and address to *contests@theweekjunior.com* with Oscar in the subject line. Enter by midnight on January 6. See theweekjunior.com/terms for complete rules.

ASK THE AUTHOR

Jaclyn Moriarty

We spoke to the author of *Oscar from Elsewhere*.

What makes a good fantasy book for you?

I like when there's some kind of a link or bridge between the fantasy world and the world we live in. I like to be able to believe that a story could happen to me.

What did you want to be when you were younger?

An author, an astronaut, a flight attendant, a schoolteacher, a psychologist, and an advertising executive.

What mythical creature do you wish were real?

A pegasus—I love horses, and imagine a flying horse!

How do you mark New Year's Eve?

I live in Australia, so I like to go to the harbor in Sydney to watch the fireworks at midnight.

Favorite animal that lives in Australia?

Kangaroos. I love seeing them in the distance, bouncing along.

4 fun activity books with winter themes

Spend an afternoon trying out the puzzles, recipes, and crafts in these picks.

Winter Mazes: 30 Awesome Mazes

By Clever Publishing, illustrated by Inna Anikeeva

(Clever Publishing)

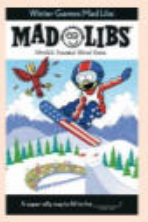
The fun mazes in this book depict holiday and winter scenes. One maze challenges you to find a path for a skater to find a Christmas tree. In another, you must follow a sequence of ingredients to make a cup of tea. *Ages 6–10*

Adventure Journal: 50 Things to Try in the Winter

By Kim Hankinson

(Gibbs Smith)

This book's crafts, recipes, and other projects offer so much to do. You can make paper lanterns, gingerbread cookies, hot chocolate, and more. One of the book's "Daily Dare" sections may inspire you to start writing a story of your own. *Ages 8–12*



Winter Games: Mad Libs

By Roger Price, Leonard Stern, and Brian D. Clark

(Mad Libs)

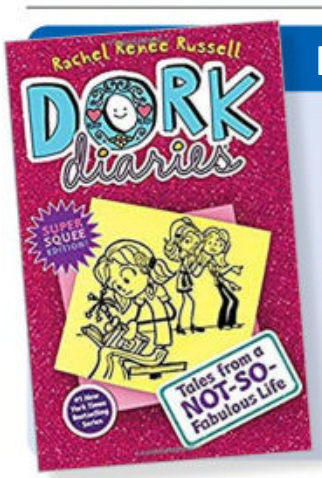
The fill-in-the-blank stories in this book are all about Olympic winter sports. You come up with nouns, verbs, adjectives, and other parts of speech to create silly short stories. Themes include downhill skiing, ice skating, bobsledding, and more. *Ages 8 and up*

Harry Potter: Winter at Hogwarts: A Magical Coloring Set

By Insight Editions

(Candlewick)

The intricate designs in this book feature the Hogwarts Express, a Yule Ball scene, and more. You could color in the pages and remove them to give to friends and family. It also includes gift tags you can use and materials to make an ornament. *Ages 8 and up*



READER RECOMMENDS

Dork Diaries *by Rachel Reneé Russell*

"*Dork Diaries* is about drama and dorks. Dork means being unique. In the story, the whole school wears fashion but Nikki Maxwell doesn't. She has a diary but others don't. There are 14 books in this series, which are about how Nikki survives middle school and protects herself from the drama queen MacKenzie Hollister. The writing makes you feel that you are in Nikki's world." Carissa, 8, California

Do you have a book to recommend? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

BOOKS: COURTESY OF THE PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: COURTESY OF JACLYN MORIARTY; GETTY IMAGES

ANCIENT SPORT
Ice skating is believed to have been invented in northern Europe around 1000 BCE.

Try out ice skating

This winter sport is a fun way to stay active in the colder weather.

Ice skating is a popular winter activity. More than 9 million people in the US glide around the ice at least once a year. You don't need much more than a pair of ice skates to participate. The activity provides great exercise and can be lots of fun to do with friends and family. Here's how to get started.

Choose your skates

The two main types of ice skates are figure skates and hockey skates. They have slightly different blades at the bottom, but beginners can use either one to skate around a rink. Most skating rinks rent out skates for a small fee, or you could borrow a pair from a friend or relative. If you think you may be skating regularly, you could talk to an adult about whether it's worth buying a pair, either new or from a secondhand sports store.

Hockey skates are one option.

Follow guidelines

Experts suggest wearing a helmet when you go ice skating. Many people wear a ski or snowboarding helmet or a bike helmet. Elbow and knee pads will provide protection if you fall on the ice. Even if the rink is indoors, you may want to wear gloves to keep your hands warm. It's smart to dress in layers. That way, if you start to heat up from all the skating, you can take a layer off without getting cold. Obey all the rules of the rink to protect yourself and others from accidents. Never skate on a frozen pond unless it has been cleared for safety and adults are present.

Find your balance

First, get comfortable being on the ice. Most rinks are surrounded by a railing that you can hold onto while you're learning. While holding the railing, push one foot forward about six inches. Then push your other foot forward. Next, try going from one foot to the other without stopping. Once you feel ready, step away from the railing. Keeping your knees slightly bent to help with your balance, push one foot forward and then another.

Start gliding

Next, practice gliding on skates. Gliding is when you move forward on the ice without moving your feet. Push off on one foot and then the other to gain some speed. Then, keep both feet on the ice and see if you have enough momentum to glide. To stop, point your toes inward and slightly angle the blades of your skates down into the ice. Remember, if you fall down while practicing any of these moves, don't worry. Falling is extremely common. Push yourself up to standing, and try again.

4 ways to stay warm outdoors

If you're doing a winter sport or playing in the snow, protect yourself from the cold by following these steps.

Dress in layers

Start by putting on a base layer, such as leggings and a turtleneck. Then add a sweatshirt and sweatpants. Finally, put on snow pants and a winter coat. Wearing layers will help your body hold in warm air.

Add accessories

To keep cold air from getting through your layers, you'll also want to wear a hat, gloves, warm socks, and boots. Tuck leggings into socks so your legs are covered. Put your gloves on before you put on your coat to ensure that your wrists are covered and don't get cold.

Keep moving

When you're outside, moving your body will create heat, keeping you warmer. If you start to feel cold from waiting your turn to use a sled, try doing some jumping jacks or jogging in place.

Take breaks

If your fingers or toes get cold, your nose starts running, and your cheeks feel red, head indoors for a break. Take off any wet and cold clothing so your skin can get dry. You can also drink a warm beverage, such as hot chocolate!

MAKE IT SNOW IN A GLASS JAR

When snow isn't in the weather forecast, create your own version inside with this fun science experiment.

1. **Mix ingredients.** Fill a 16-ounce glass jar about two thirds of the way full with baby oil. In a separate bowl, mix a squirt of acrylic white paint with about ¼ cup of water and pour into the jar. Notice that the water sinks and the oil stays on top.
2. **Make a storm.** With an adult's permision, break up an antacid tablet, such as Alka Seltzer, into small pieces, and drop two or three into the jar. The white water will bubble up through the oil, creating the look of a "snowstorm" for about 45 seconds. Drop another antacid into the mixture to see it again.
3. **Know the science.** The snowstorm happened because antacids have sodium bicarbonate and citric acid in them. When those ingredients mixed with the water, they caused bubbles of carbon dioxide to rise up through the oil. When the carbon dioxide was released into the air, the remaining water fell back down through the oil since oil and water don't mix.

WOW! India produces more than 12 million tons of chickpeas a year, the most of any country in the world.

WARNING! Ask an adult before using an oven and food processor.

Bake up falafel dippers

Ingredients

- 8 ounces dried chickpeas
- ½ yellow onion
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 cup parsley, plus more for garnish
- ¼ cup mint leaves
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon coriander
- 1½ teaspoons salt, plus two pinches, divided
- Olive oil
- ¼ cup tahini
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 2 to 4 tablespoons warm water

Instructions

1. Place the dried chickpeas in a bowl or jar of water, and let them soak for 12 hours or overnight.
2. Preheat oven to 375° F. Drain, rinse, and dry the chickpeas. Roughly chop the onion. Place chickpeas in the bowl of a food processor along with the onion, garlic, parsley, and mint.
3. Pulse until the mixture resembles a fine meal. Pour into a large bowl and mix in the cumin, coriander, and salt.
4. Grease a baking sheet with olive oil. Using a tablespoon, form the falafel mixture into small mounds and place onto the baking sheet, taking care to avoid crumbling. Drizzle the tops of the falafel with more olive oil and bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until the bottoms are golden and the balls hold together. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with a pinch of salt.
5. Meanwhile, prepare the tahini sauce. Combine the tahini, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt in a bowl and mix. Add the warm water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until the mixture is smooth. Top with chopped parsley.
6. Serve the falafel with the tahini sauce on the side. Makes 4 servings.

ECO TIP OF THE WEEK: MEND YOUR CLOTHES

If you get a hole in a shirt or a pair of pants, you can try mending the clothing so you can keep wearing it. One way to do this is by sewing on a patch that covers the hole. Ask an adult if you can try it. Using fabric scissors, cut out a piece of fabric that is slightly larger than the hole. Place it over the hole, and secure it with pins. Using a needle and thread, sew stitches to secure the patch. To make a stitch, push the needle up through the clothing and the patch, then push the needle back down through the patch and clothing. Repeat until you've sewn stitches around all the edges. Knot the thread, cut the thread above the knot, and remove the pins. You may like the clothing even more now!

A patch can cover a hole.

ERICA CLARK FOR STONE KITCHEN CREATIVE; GETTY IMAGES (2); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

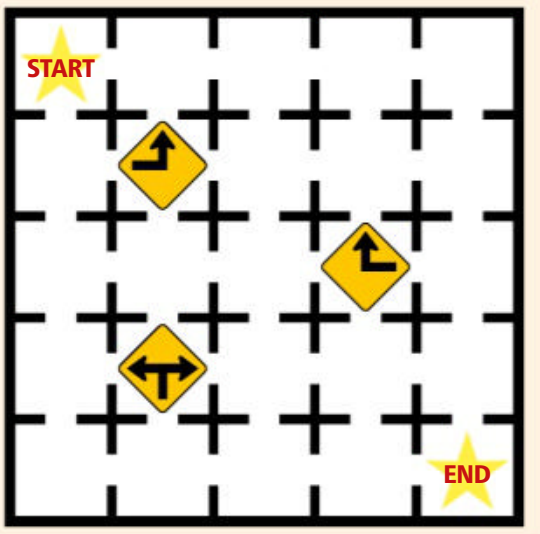
Word ladder

To change the word LONG into the word HAIR, use each clue to fill in a word that is only one letter different from the word before it. If you get stuck, try solving from the bottom up.

	L O N G
Body part that fills with air when you breathe ▶	
A step on a ladder ▶	
Made a sound like a bell ▶	
_____ and rave (complain loudly) ▶	
Wish for ▶	
Sit around until it's your turn ▶	
Cry loudly like an infant ▶	
Weather phenomenon of icy pellets ▶	
	H A I R

DETOURS

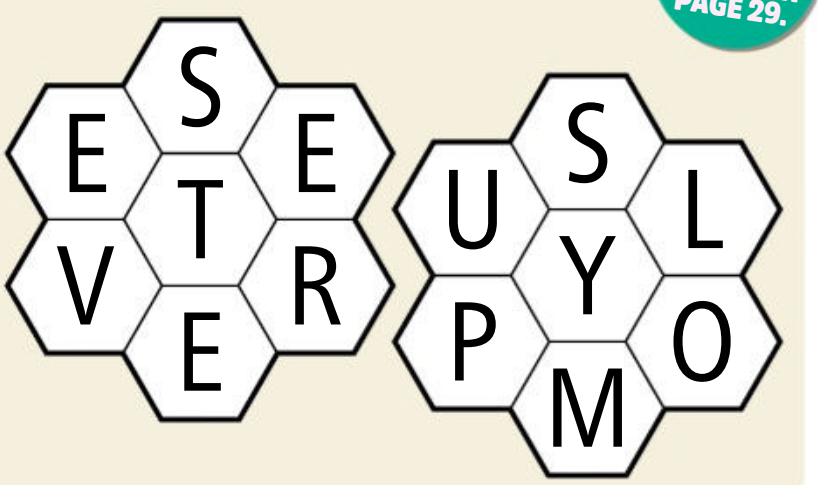
Draw one continuous path from START to END that goes through every single square without crossing itself. For squares with signs, you may only enter at the arrow's base, and you may only make a turn in the direction of an arrow shown.



STEPPING STONES

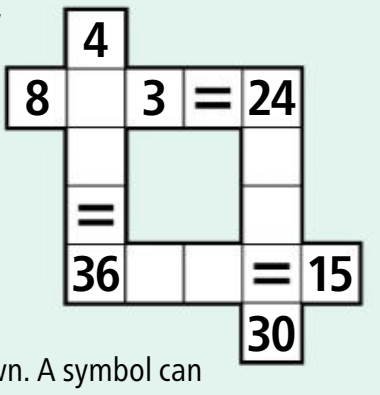
ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Each figure hides the seven-letter name of a mountain. To find each one, start anywhere and move in an unbroken path through letters that share a border (no jumping!), using each letter once. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)



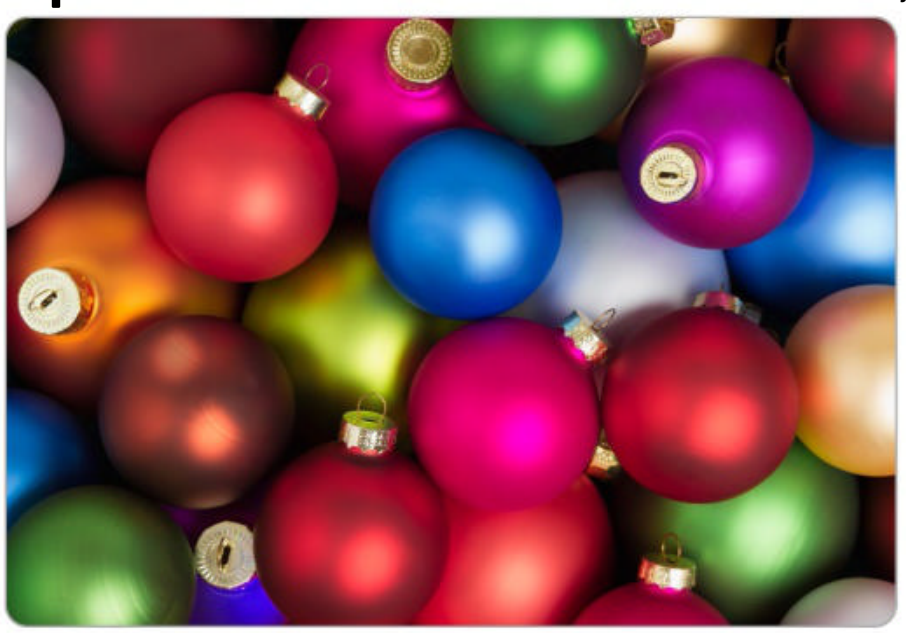
Crossmath

Fill each empty box with a number or a mathematical symbol (+, −, ×, or ÷) to complete the equations across and down. A symbol can be used more than once.



Spot the difference

These two pictures of holiday ornaments appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?



PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

stepping stones hint: The second answer begins with O.

That's unbelievable!

Andy Hackett with his jumbo catch

A giant surprise on a fishing line

During a trip to the Bluewater Lakes in France, Andy Hackett, a fisherman from the UK, caught one of the world's largest goldfish. The 67-pound fish, nicknamed "The Carrot," was introduced to the lake 20 years ago as a challenge for people to catch. Because the fish usually avoids the water's surface, it has rarely been hooked. Catching The Carrot was "sheer luck," said Hackett. He spent 25 minutes reeling in the humongous fish, took a photo for proof, then released it back into the lake.

Dressing for the season

Move over, Elf on the Shelf—the latest rhyming holiday trend is Ranch on a Branch. The Hidden Valley salad dressing company has introduced a limited-edition plush character named Ranchie, along with a storybook that tells of his longing to become a real bottle of ranch dressing. The company said the toy's Velcro hands and feet can be used to hang Ranchie in a different spot each day "as a reminder to spread joy."

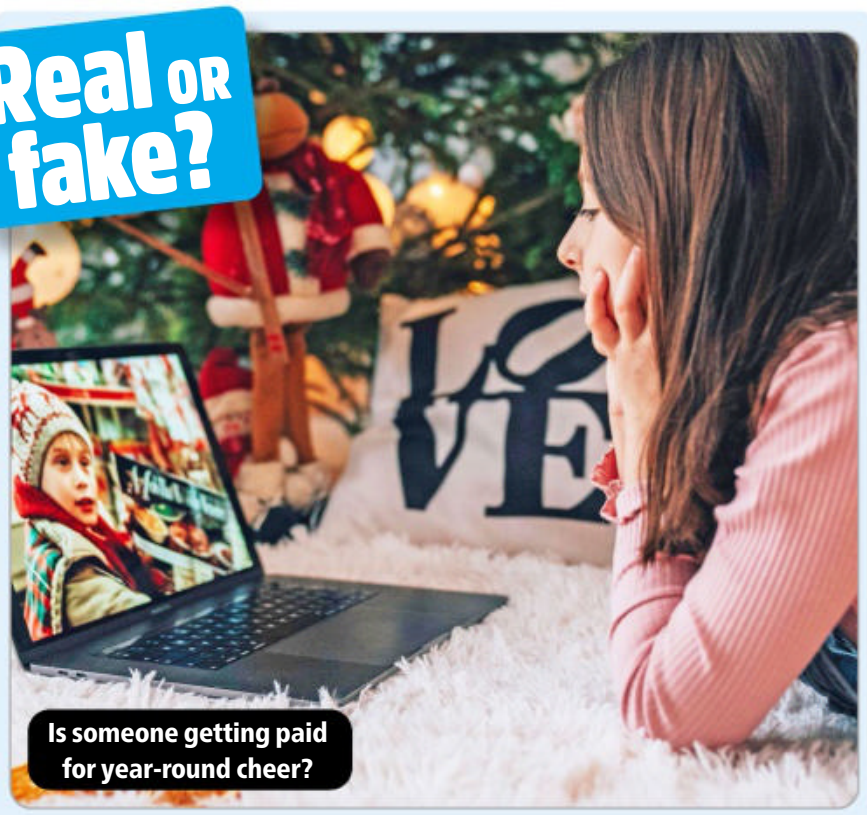
Ranchie

The cat was let out of the bag.

A pet gets packed up

Security officials at New York City's John F. Kennedy airport spotted an unusual shape while scanning a man's luggage. A tuft of orange fur poking out from the black bag led to the discovery that a family member's cat had curled up inside the suitcase. The feline was safely returned home, and the man later booked a new, cat-free flight to his destination.

Real or fake?



Is someone getting paid for year-round cheer?

Joyful job for holiday lovers

Cozying up with some hot cocoa and a movie is all in a day's work for one lucky person, whose job involves watching a holiday-themed film every day for a year. The "Chief of Cheer" being hired by CableTV.com gets free access to streaming services plus $100 per movie watched. One of the job's duties is to give opinions about the films, such as *Elf*, *A Christmas Story*, and *Home Alone*. Is this job a Christmas miracle, or will your hopes be Dasher-ed by finding out it's a lie?*

Vic Clinco brings the heat.

Man obsessed with spicy sauces

A North Carolina man is believed to have the world's largest collection of hot sauce bottles. Vic Clinco, who has amassed more than 11,000 bottles over almost 26 years, said that collecting the sauces has turned into an "obsession." He wants to host tasting events and is hoping to have his spicy stash verified as a world record. "I want [the sauces] to be shared with anyone that has the love of the heat as I do," Clinco said.

*Fake! The job is real but lasts for only 25 movie-filled days. "Trust us, it sounds easier than it is," the company said. They added that the successful applicant would "have to supply your own hot chocolate and gingerbread."

BNPS; HIDDEN VALLEY; @TSA/TWITTER; VIC CLINCO/BARCROFT; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

Editor's note

This week it's my honor to announce the grand prize winner of our Winter Cover Contest. You can see Ellery's incredible drawing on our front cover and read what the judges had to say about her work on p16. Congratulations, Ellery! It is also my privilege to congratulate runners-up Clemence and Hadley (p16) and all our finalists (p17). To help us with the difficult task of choosing these honorees from the nearly 700 submissions we received, we were fortunate to have the help of our esteemed judges: award-winning authors and artists Kat Fajardo, Jeff Kinney, and Jo Rioux. Thank you to them! I am grateful, also, to Dean Abatemarco, creative director of *The Week Junior* and an artist himself, for overseeing the judging. As Dean told me, "Every child who entered deserves to be celebrated. Their work was outstanding!"

Andrea Barbalich
Editor-in-Chief

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

Mutts with a Mission

This organization trains service dogs for people who need them, such as veterans with disabilities. Many of the group's volunteers care for the puppies that are being trained in their homes and take them to classes. Other volunteers assist with events and work to increase awareness for supporting veterans and other people who serve their communities. Find out more at muttswithamission.org.

Warming up with soup

Many readers wrote to us about how much they enjoyed making the quick tortellini soup from Issue 136. If you'd like to try it too, you can find the recipe at kids.theweekjunior.com/activities.

"I made the tortellini soup for my family, and we all loved it!" Ben, 10, Massachusetts

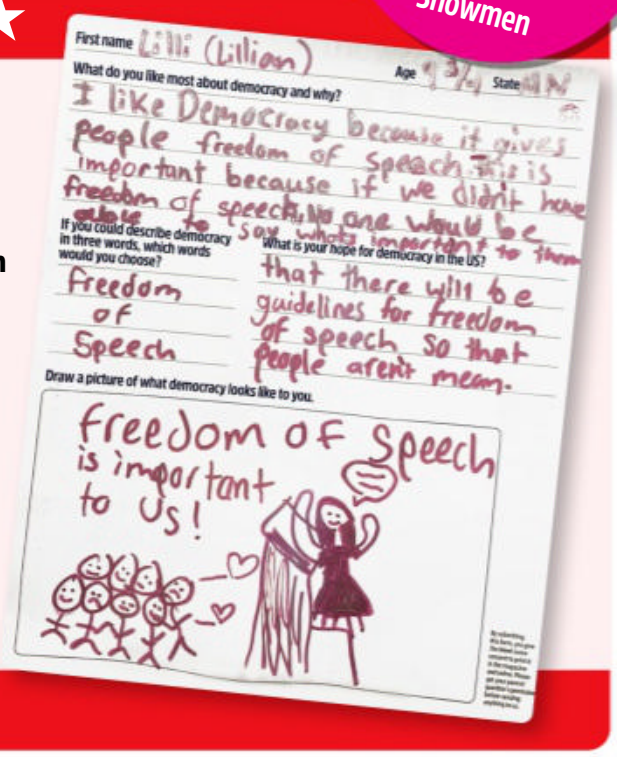
"We made the quick tortellini soup and it was delicious! We are vegetarians, so we love trying new vegetarian recipes." Grace, 12, New York

"I'm following the recipe for the delicious tortellini soup." Ezra, 10, New Jersey

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK
Who get smaller the warmer they get?
Snowmen

Celebrating our democracy

A founding principle of the United States is that it's a democracy—meaning that citizens hold the power to elect the people who govern them. As a reader of *The Week Junior*, you may have opinions about America's democratic process. If so, we want to hear them! Go to kids.theweekjunior.com/activities to download a form, like the one at right. Fill it out, then have an adult email it to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*. We'll feature some of the submissions on this page in future issues.

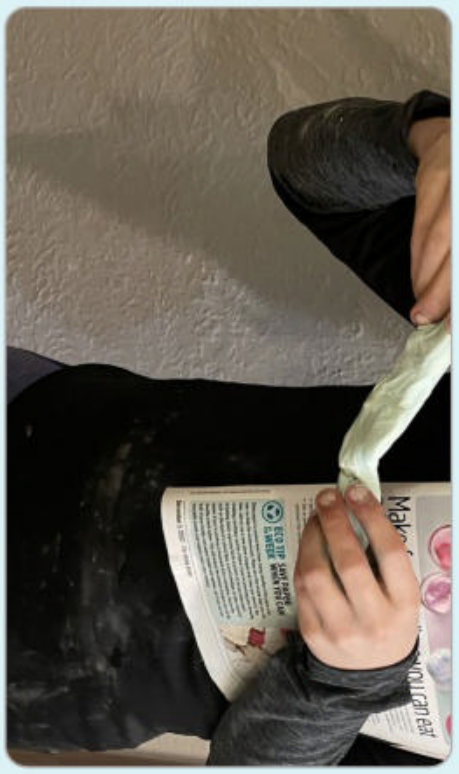

First name Lilli (Lillian) Age 9 State NY
What do you like most about democracy and why?
I like Democracy because it gives people freedom of speach. This is important because if we didn't have freedom of speech no one would be able to say whats important to them
If you could describe democracy in three words, which words would you choose?
Freedom of Speech
What is your hope for democracy in the US?
that there will be guidelines for freedom of speech so that people aren't mean.
Draw a picture of what democracy looks like to you.
Freedom of Speech is important to us!

THE WEEK Junior **IT'S YOUR TURN** Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com.*

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Send them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you'd like to tell us about what's in the photo.



"I loved making this edible slime on a snowy day!" Ellie, 11, Minnesota

"I like to play tennis and basketball and read *The Week Junior*." Kyler, 10, Louisiana

"I love reading and collecting *The Week Junior* magazines! I read them every time I'm in the car!" Izzy, 9, Georgia

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Ms. Walker**

School: **Vancouver School of Arts and Academics**

"I think Ms. Walker is the best orchestra teacher for many reasons. She is welcoming and funny, and she makes each class exciting and enticing. I had never played violin before this year, and she has built my confidence. I admire her dedication, and I hope to know her for a long time."

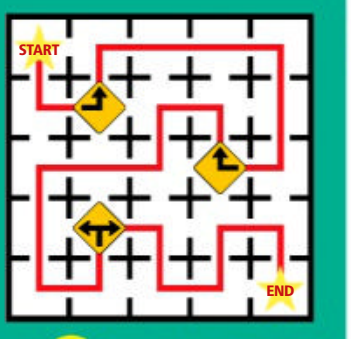
Anne, 12, Washington

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week! Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: MUTTS WITH A MISSION

Puzzle answers (from page 26)

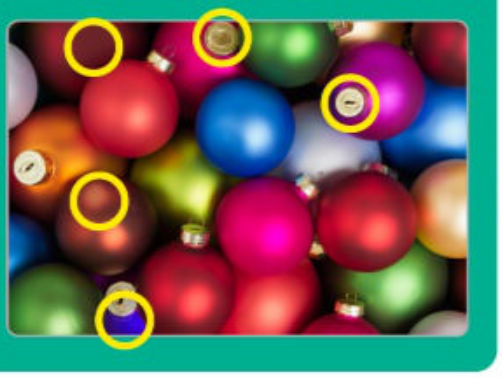
		4		
8	×	3	=	24
9				+
=				6
36	−	21	=	15
		30		



Word ladder

long
lung
rung
rang
rant
want
wait
wail
hail
hair

Stepping stones
Everest, Olympus



Quiz answers (from page 30)

1 b) Canada **2** Wordle **3** True **4** b) A mirror **5** Spanish **6** a) Mississippi **7** a) A cat **8** Roald Dahl **9** False. It weighs about 10 times the mass of the Sun. **10** c) A pig **11** Morocco **12** c) South Korea **13** LeVar Burton **14** True **15** a) Goldfish

POPJAM

Sign up and follow @theweekjuniorus on PopJam, a social media platform for kids 7–12. Ask an adult to download the app from iTunes or Google Play.

We asked: What song did you most enjoy listening to this year?

"'Payphone' by Maroon 5."

"'Golden Hour' is a really good one."

"Taylor Swift's new album, *Midnights*. Her songs are so uplifting!"

"I really like 'Levitating' by Dua Lipa."

In the big debate, we asked: Are climate protests going too far?

"They are going too far because the *Mona Lisa* didn't deserve to be covered in soup."

"No way. They are trying to stop something that's becoming even worse by the second."

"We need to stand up for what we think is right, but vandalizing is not a good approach."

Now tell us: What are you most excited about doing in 2023?

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your full name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

Quiz of the week

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 A snowman named Bonhomme Carnaval greets visitors every year at a winter carnival in what country?

a) Japan b) Canada c) Switzerland

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 What was the most commonly searched term on Google in 2022?

---

3 True or false? Baby seals can tell musical patterns apart without training.

True ☐ False ☐

4 In *The Astonishing Chronicles of Oscar from Elsewhere*, what object transports Oscar to a city of elves?

a) A key b) A mirror c) A wardrobe

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

5 Noelia González is hosting a podcast for NASA in what language?

---

6 The fossils of large, bird-like dinosaurs were discovered in what US state?

a) Mississippi b) Montana c) New Mexico

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

7 Security officials at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport found what common pet in a passenger's luggage?

a) A cat b) A dog c) A rabbit

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

8 The new movie *Matilda the Musical* is based on a book by what author?

1

3

10

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

12

9

9 True or false? Gaia BH1, the closest known black hole to Earth, weighs about three times the mass of the Sun.

True ☐ False ☐

10 In the video game Dragon Quest Treasures, Porcus is a spirit that resembles what animal?

a) A cat b) A fox c) A pig

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

11 Which country became the first from Africa to make the World Cup semifinals?

---

12 A new law means that everyone will become at least a year younger in which country?

a) China b) Japan

c) South Korea

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 Which actor and director was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the first-ever Children's & Family Emmy Awards?

---

14 True or false? NASA's Orion spacecraft splashed down in the Pacific Ocean exactly 50 years after humans last landed on the Moon.

True ☐ False ☐

15 A man in France caught one of the world's largest fish of which species?

a) Goldfish b) Hatchet fish

c) Zebrafish

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

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Group publisher: Paul Vizza (*paul.vizza@futurenet.com*)
Account director: Mary Gallagher (*mary.gallagher@futurenet.com*)
US manufacturing and distribution manager: Lori Crook

Reader submissions: *hello@theweekjunior.com*
Customer service: *TWJcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com*
Editorial news: *news@theweekjunior.com*
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The Week Junior (ISSN 2689-9027) is published weekly, except January 7, January 14, July 15, and September 16. *The Week Junior* is published by Future PLC, 135 West 41st Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTERS: Send change of address to *The Week Junior,* PO Box 37595, Boone, IA 50037-7595.

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THE WEEK Junior

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There are more than 200 species of squirrels in the world. They can run up to 20 miles an hour, and many are good climbers.

GETTY IMAGES